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MILES CASSIDY INTRODUCES HIMSELF TO THE DEAN OF ST. OGIVE'S.

Page 24.

WHICH IS WHICH?

OR,

MILES CASSIDY'S CONTRACT.

A Picture Story.

BY

ROBERT B. BROUGH.

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PREFACE.

THE following chapters are intended to record the progress and success of an undertaking which, though never of Leviathan proportions, or of sub-ocean-telegraphic importance to the world at large, has nevertheless been considered worthy of humble preservation in the annals of human enterprise, skill, and endurance.

It is to be regretted that the laudable custom of prefixing to the histories of great or meritorious works some particulars of the early lives and antecedents of their authors cannot, in the present case, be observed. The date and place of Mr. Cassidy's birth, even, cannot be ascertained with anything like accuracy; though the event is conjectured to have taken place in Ireland, and must certainly have occurred

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during the latter half of the eighteenth century. The names and social position of his parents can only be guessed at. As Mr. Cassidy never learnt to read in his life, the question of his education is easily disposed of.

Nothing, in fact, can be known of him with any certainty, except the events of his life immediately in connection with the important achievement to which he devoted the best days of his valuable existence, and which it is the object of the following pages to record and celebrate.

In conclusion of these preliminary observations, it need only be stated that the excellent modern practice of accompanying records of public occurrences with authentic pictorial illustration has been adopted in the present work, as far as the very scanty materials in the author's possession would admit of.

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BOOK I.

IN WHICH MR. CASSIDY FIXES ON HIS SITE AND COLLECTS MATERIALS.

WHICH IS WHICH?

OR,

MILES CASSIDY'S CONTRACT.

CHAPTER I.

FISH OUT OF WATER.

TOWARDS the end of October, in the year 1803, Mr. Miles Cassidy made his first appearance one fine morning in the streets of Oxford, to the great amusement of the inhabitants, and astonishment of himself.

The beautifully-dressed ladies, in their charming tight cylindrical skirts, and with their lovely waists

touching their exquisite shoulders; the fine young college bucks, in their graceful gowns and pretty square caps, adorned with the majestic stick-up collar and fifteen-fold cravat of the period; the spruce townsmen, with their bright blue, green, and plum-coloured long-tailed coats, cut square above the waist, so as to show a sufficiency of waistcoat beneath, their nice tight buckskins, that they got in and out of with pulleys, their half-moon shaped hats, and their powdered hair; the gorgeous beadles, in their gold-lace and cocked hats; and, more than all, the dashing footmen, in their resplendent liveries, looked upon Mr. Cassidy as a highly ridiculous personage.

It can scarcely be said that, in return, Mr. Cassidy looked upon them at all, or, indeed, very much to his right or to his left. He was on business, and had no time to look about him. He trudged along the streets of the most beautiful city in England (some say in the world) as you see him in the picture, with a little boy trotting on each side of him, tolerably indifferent to surrounding circumstances.

As Mr. Cassidy and his two young friends—both of whom will occupy a prominent position in this history—are proceeding through St. Giles's along Magdalen and Corn-market Streets, finally turning into the world-famous High Street, we may as well accompany them, in order to obtain a closer and more accurate view of their persons than, perhaps,

the excellent intentions of the artist have enabled him to convey.

To begin with, the trio were poorly dressed, dusty, travel-stained, and most unmistakably Irish. Yet, in spite of their obvious nationality and their apparent poverty, the little group displayed no signs of that squalor and wretchedness by which immigrants from the sister isle were, at that time, much more than is now happily the case, too easily recognisable in an

English community. They were terribly sunburnt and way-worn, it is true; but they formed a pleasant picture of health, and, what was really strange, of neatness. The man, whom I hope you will justify me in calling my hero ere long, was tall, well-built, and in the early prime of life. But for a slight stoop in the shoulders, indicative, perhaps, of a sedentary occupation, and for the shambling stride of one accustomed to pedestrianism purely as a means of locomotion, and without reference to its resources for developing the human graces, would have been pronounced a rather splendid-looking fellow, such as a dark-eyed Biddy or an apple-faced Kathleen of his native bog-land might have been well excused for getting foolish about. He was broad-browed and broad-chested. He had fine open, inquiring eyes, of a remarkably clear blue. Above these, a pair of bushy, fawn-coloured brows were constantly knitted, as if in perplexed thought, thereby slightly detracting from the winning ingenuousness of his countenance. His nose was broad and slightly vulgar; his upper lip long, and his mouth large. But the mouth was well cut, and wholly devoid of sensuality. A broad, and rather prominent, chin gave a character of decision to the face, which, in the restless blue eyes, and wide, but by no means projecting, brow, was certainly wanting. His face was burnt almost to the colour of a house-brick, causing his tawny, shock

head of hair (that was cropped almost to the closeness of a velvet pile), dense eyebrows, and short scraps of whisker to appear lighter than they really were. He was cleanly shaved; and his coarse, high-collared shirt was dazzlingly white, though deplorably frayed at the edges. His two frieze coats, upper and under, had been repeatedly, though in all cases neatly, patched, evidently with carefully saved fragments of the original cloth. The same may be said of his cord breeches, rough blue stockings, and heavy-nailed brogues.

The little fellows toddling by his side were as plump as guinea-pigs. They were apparently twins, being nearly of the same size, and bearing a decided resemblance one to the other. They were darker in complexion than their adult companion—black-eyed, olive-skinned, and of that arch, full-blooded, humorous type, with which Mr. John Philip's wonderful studies of Spanish life have recently familiarised us, supporting the theories of certain ethnologists, who have agreed to ascribe to the boys of Tipperary and Waterford an Iberian descent. They were dressed exactly alike, the costume of each, except that they wore no overcoats, being a miniature copy of their guardian's—large collars, frieze coats, knee breeches, darns, patches, and cleanliness complete. Each carried a small bundle. Their unwonted appearance —their nationality considered—of having been ac-

customed to habitual washing, and a good deal of scrubbing with coarse towels, was really remarkable.

They were an undoubtedly funny, but yet a prepossessing, little couple of oddities. And they trotted wonderingly along the beautiful streets of the University-city, to the mutual satisfaction of their spectators and of themselves. They turned up their bright little faces, opened their large round eyes, elevated their jet black eyebrows, and grinned with more than reciprocal good humour to the people who laughed at them as they passed.

One of the children was, if anything, a trifle taller, stouter, and, perhaps, of a more plebeian type than his brother. But, as has been stated, a strong resemblance existed between them, so much so that it might have been difficult for a casual observer to distinguish them apart.

The man's care of them was constant and absorbing. Their docility and confidence in his protection offered a charming proof of the tie of love between them. If one little truant—attracted by a dazzling shop-window, an equipage, or an unusual costume—lagged behind for a moment, a look, a smile, a gesture from the father (for such appeared to be the man's relationship to them) was sufficient to quicken the short, sturdy legs into an absurd trot, and the main rank was immediately regained. If danger menaced—as it occasionally did, in the shape of a big dog or an un-

feeling *gamin*—the frieze-coat skirts of the parent afforded an ample harbour of refuge. Once permitted to cling to the hem of that magical garment, they could afford to turn and smile good-humoured defiance at the enemy.

Of course such a singular group could not pass through the streets of an English city without incurring many personal remarks, not, for the most part, complimentary. These made little impression upon our traveller, who, indeed, appeared a man accustomed to endurance and resignation. If the appearance of the little troop excited, as occasionally would happen, a really humorous comment, he observed an Irishman's unfailing honesty in such cases: he gave a laugh for a joke. To mere senseless insults he was simply deaf. When too hotly pressed by the inquisitive and critical, he would just lower the bundle from his shoulder, take the children each by the hand, and quicken his pace.

At a certain point in the High Street, nearly opposite St. Mary's, he drew a letter from his breast-pocket, and glanced round with the eager, undecided look that was his characteristic, as if in search of some one whom he could rely upon for desired information. He made two or three "false starts" at addressing foot-passengers; but there was something in the face or manner of each that deterred him on inspection. At length he made up his mind that a

good-natured-looking shopkeeper, standing in his own doorway, was the right person to be applied to.

Pray notice this trivial circumstance, reader, as typical of a man's character in whom I hope to interest you. Miles Cassidy was a man who could never make up his mind, even on an unimportant matter, without the endurance of real agony. But, his mind once made up to what he believed a right course, he would pursue it patiently and diligently, through toil, misconception, and even to martyrdom.

Miles stepped up to the good-natured-looking shopkeeper, and begged him, with true Irish politeness, to direct him to the address inscribed on the letter he held in his hand. The shopkeeper, with true English rudeness, scrutinised Miles and his two little charges, in succession, from head to foot, before condescending to answer. Then, with true English good-nature, which Cassidy had been quite right in ascribing to him, he put himself to considerable trouble of speech in giving the information required, and was even at the pains to put on his hat and step round a corner, in order to assist the wanderers in their pilgrimage by manual indications—which he did in a truly British manner, insolently, patronisingly, and thoroughly.

The letter was addressed to a very great personage indeed, no other than a very reverend dean, the

principal of one of the most renowned colleges in Oxford, which, if you please, we will call St. Ogive's. It was reached through a succession of the beautiful lanes of crumbling gray and waving green that lie between "the High" and Christchurch Meadows,—fitting attendants upon the fair Queen of Streets, whose dazzling glories they enhance by the contrast of their own demure loveliness.

To be informed that poor simple Miles Cassidy was utterly astonished and bewildered by the panorama of architectural beauty he now witnessed for the first time, would be superfluous to anybody who has ever undergone the same experience. But Miles was a man accustomed to take astonishment very quietly. He had been used to a good deal of it in various ways, and necessity had led him unconsciously to adopt Candide's philosophy, that it is better to go on cultivating one's garden than to stop to wonder at everything one cannot comprehend. Miles was at present fully occupied with the *idée fixe* of finding out St. Ogive's College, and of delivering the letter of which he was the bearer to the principal of that edifice; and he trudged on through the shower of strange beauty that assailed his imagination on every side, just as he would have plodded through a hail-storm.

St. Ogive's was soon reached, and easily recognised from the shopkeeper's description.

"Here we are, darlin's!" said Miles, pulling up his diminutive troop before the magnificent gateway of the college; "think of all that for a school now! Holy Mother! who'd believe it in the ould place?"

"It's bigger dan Misther Doolan's," squeaked one of the little fellows—a deplorable platitude, merely uttered because the speaker felt himself called upon to say something, not because the crumbling glories of St. Ogive's impressed him with any more wonder than the smallest of the thousand and one novelties he had witnessed since his arrival in the town. To a child, in a strange place, everything is alike marvellous.

"Misther Doolan's, indeed! get out wid ye, Teddy! Faix! and I'm almost thinking it's the wrong shop we've come to. But here's a gentleman as can tell us. My sarvice to ye, sir, and could I spake with the masther?"

"Hook it! be off! get out, can't ye?"

The gentleman who thus graciously responded to Miles Cassidy's courteous address was no other than Mr. Botts, porter of St. Ogive's. The majority of college servants seem to me selected as a merciful provision for the checking of any sudden and perilous excitement of the organ of veneration, which a first sight of the calm beauties of the places they are appointed to disfigure might give rise to in a visitor. Wonderfully "leary," *rusé*, cynical-looking old fellows

they are, for the most part, these porters, scouts, common-room men, or whatever names they may go by. Their aspect is enough to bring you down from the clouds to a sense of the nether earth and its dodges. They know the secrets of so many back-staircases! They have seen so much of the wrong side of the gorgeous mantle of the Alma Mater whose by-blows they are. And their faces are usually a pretty accurate label of the kind of knowledge they have locked up in their musty, snuffy, old bosoms.

Mr. Botts was an admirable specimen of his class. His appearance was suggestive of High Church come to grief—once ruby port in the condition of mouldy vinegar. He gave you the idea of a bishop who had been degraded from his see for corrupt and intemperate practices, and who had preserved his episcopal uniform in a condition as unsatisfactory as his reputation. Not but that the garments of Mr. Botts may have been of excellent material, and in the most perfect repair,—only they didn't look so. The cloth didn't appear black enough, or the cravat white enough. The latter article looked as though it had been washed in buttery ale, and ironed with a tap-room shovel. The folds of Mr. Botts' coat, vest, and "subfusc garments," appeared to have crept into the wrong places, furtively, and for no good. The gaiters were out of all drawing, and did not seem to

have been buttoned in a straightforward, overhand manner. The hat was put on at a most disreputable angle. Much winking at peccadilloes would seem to have made the eyes of Mr. Botts small and foxy. The pockets of his inexpressibles were worn cavernous, as with the receipt of various kinds of hush-money. A habit of cringing to superiors had deprived his figure of any majesty it may have possessed originally. This was in a manner compensated by a fine expression of severity his brows had acquired in a thirty years' war with his literally "arch" enemies, the beggars and street children, who were constantly besieging his portal, and finding themselves sorry for it. The nose of Mr. Botts was quite red, and his mouth enormous. A slight look of jollity, the result, no doubt, of ample leisure, perquisites, and refreshment, formed the only redeeming expression of Mr. Botts' appearance. But, upon the whole, he was not a nice-looking man.

"Now, can't you be off, I say!" Mr. Botts repeated, seeing his visitors immovable, and looking his ugliest, in order to frighten them away at once.

Mr. Cassidy, with all his considerable merits, was the touchiest of mortals; and though no man could better command his feelings when he saw occasion, he was remarkably apt to give vent to them when no such necessity existed. And, in his own way, he was

as proud as Lucifer. So he returned Mr. Botts' scowl with defiance, and said, stiffly,—

"I 've a letter for the masther."

"Oh, be off!—there 's no master here: it 's a principal. Cut!"

"Maybe ye can read?"

Mr. Botts possessed that accomplishment sufficiently to perceive that the letter Miles Cassidy thrust under his nose, with a lordly gesture, was addressed to the principal of St. Ogive's. He took it, and asked,—

"Who 's it from?"

"Maybe the gentleman will be able to tell you that when he 's read it," was the lofty answer.

Mr. Botts looked up, fiercely. But seeing the speaker remarkably big and self-possessed, he looked down again, and merely said,

"Do you want a hanswer?"

"I do."

"Then I suppose you must have one. Stop here."

Mr. Botts shambled into the sunny quadrangle, and looked round as for a messenger. Then Miles Cassidy had an opportunity of observing the wonderful plasticity of countenance at the command of that gentleman, proving that the porter of St. Ogive's was, if not a Cerberus with three heads, certainly a Janus with two faces. For at the sight of two

imposing-looking dons, who made their appearance on the other side of "quad," the hat of Mr. Botts flew off, his body became supple, his features expanded into the most slavish of grins, and he continued ducking, fawning, and grinning at the dons (who did not so much as look at him), for several seconds, like a wicked old Malvolio practising in the sun.

A man-servant making his appearance, the porter beckoned him, and gave him Cassidy's letter. The servant vanished with it.

Mr. Botts is not intended to be a character in this history. But he was considered, *per se*, worthy the honour of an incidental sketch. Moreover, there is this importance attached to him, that if he had received our travellers more graciously, Mr. Cassidy might have been disposed to favour him with a little conversation as to the object of his visit to St. Ogive's, in which case Mr. Botts would probably have opened our hero's eyes to certain matters, a clear understanding of which on his part might have been the means of completely altering the course of our story,—

"Thus great events from little causes spring."

But Mr. Cassidy maintained a dignified silence, and turned his back upon Mr. Botts—who, to be sure, was not much affected by that treatment—till the man-servant returned.

"Here's a rum start!" said the latter to Mr. Botts. "They're to be shown up to his room."

"What! brats and all?"

"By Jove, they *are!* He said 'them.'"

"Well, *I* can't help it," Mr. Botts remarked, as though to say he would willingly spare his college such a disgrace, if in his power. "Here, you're to follow this man."

Miles drew the little boys yet more closely to his side, and followed the servant across the quadrangle, exclaiming in awe-stricken soliloquy,

"My! It's a lovely place! I'm afeard it's too good to be true. A dale of clargy there seems to be about! I hope there's no mistake."

As Miles looked back, he perceived Mr. Botts again enacting Malvolio in the sun, but this time without a visible object of adoration. Mr. Botts was, in fact, bowing to the Dean's window, as he invariably did whenever he passed it. Time and the buttery ale had done their work upon the porter's eyesight; and he could never clearly see whether the Dean was looking out of window or not, so he always bowed on speculation, wisely considering that out of so much servility thrown up *some* of it must stick. It was a conspicuous article in Mr. Botts' philosophic code, that "the thicker you lays it on the better they likes it, and the bigger they is the more they can swallow."

CHAPTER II.

AN OWL DISTURBED IN HIS IVY-BUSH.

The Very Reverend Erasmus Bashawe, Dean of St. Ogive's, was a living refutation of the proverb about heroes and their valets. If he was a great man in anybody's estimation (as he was in a great many people's: his own for one) he was most certainly so in that of his own domestics. They were his slaves. His word was their law. They approached him in speechless terror, and served him with Oriental submission. The distinguished personage who had delivered Miles Cassidy's letter to his master would no more have ventured, unsolicited, to offer the slightest comment upon the quality or appearance of the bearer than he would have dared to look over the Dean's shoulder during his perusal of the letter.

Doctor Bashawe was supposed to know more about Greek particles than any man living. For this and collateral reasons of like vital importance to the interests of the Protestant religion they were going to

make him a bishop, and the Doctor was perfectly aware of it. Such knowledge was not likely to lessen the very reverend gentleman's innate sense of his own consequence, and it didn't.

The worthy Dean's estimate of his own undoubted merits and importance may be explained in a compact syllogism.

The Dean considered the University of Oxford the greatest of earthly institutions.

He considered himself the greatest man in the University of Oxford. (For was he not to be made a bishop before the Vice-Chancellor? and could that dignitary stand up before him for two minutes in a contest upon the Greek particles?)

Ergo—the Dean of St. Ogive's considered himself the greatest man in the world.

He was, perhaps, not aware that he entertained such an opinion of himself, and would have been disgusted with any sycophant who might hint that he was entitled to do so. It was his real opinion nevertheless.

The Dean was the most tremendous disciplinarian in Oxford. If he had been a beadle, and the undergraduates of his college charity children, they could not have feared him more. Fortunately for his college, it was considered a very high honour to take a degree there; or really, such was the terror inspired by the Spartan *régime* of the principal, that

the foundation might have languished for want of scholars.

Our Dean was emphatically a "great gun," a "big wig," and a magnate. He was wise, learned, influential, and—last, not least—rich. For, scholar and recluse as he had long been, Doctor Bashawe was of an old family, and some convenient deaths had put him in possession of some snug landed estates. For many years he had been accustomed to respect and adulation, which he accepted affably as his due.

Character and circumstances had combined to make him the sort of person of whom an obscure bard has written:—

"A hat two seconds on a head he scarcely ever saw,
The earliest word he learnt to speak was registered as law:
Were you and I to laugh at him, he 'd look on us with awe.
As lunatics escaped from dungeon, whipping-post, and straw,
Would this fine old English gentleman,
Worthy the olden time."

How came it, then, that so august a personage could so far unbend as to accord an interview to poor Miles Cassidy, with his little boys and his big bundle?

In the first place, perhaps, because the Dean was a just man; and he believed it the duty of the great to be accessible. As he esteemed himself the greatest living authority upon various important points, theological and political, he thought it quite natural that people should desire his conclusive opinion on such

subjects,—an advantage he did not deem himself justified in withholding from the lowest. Hence the Dean had a good deal of correspondence on his hands, which he disposed of unflinchingly, and a frequency of strange visitors, whom he seldom sent away unattended to.

In the second place, the Dean's landed estates lay in Ireland, and there were rumours of a general election. At such a time a visitor of bogtrotting aspect may have been a subject for even Very Reverend conciliation. Who knows?

In the third place, the letter delivered by Miles Cassidy to Mr. Botts, by that gentleman to the Dean's body servant, and thence without further quarantine (as was the rule) into the great man's own hands—as he sat in his library pounding Greek roots into cement for the church walls of England—was worded as follows:—

Clonmel, Sep. 11, 18—.

My dear Dean,

This is to introduce to you my friend, Mr. Miles Cassidy, of this country, with his two gifted and interesting sons, for whom he is anxious to obtain the advantages of an Oxford education. Need I say I have strongly recommended him to old Saint Ogive's? Our former friendship, I am sure, will justify me in requesting you to further his views, and to show him any civility in your power.

Wishing you continual health and fame,

Believe me, my dear Dean,

Ever sincerely yours,

Edmund Smith.

The Dean frowned, took off his gold spectacles, and beat time with them against his nose thoughtfully.

"Smith!" he murmured, "Edmund Smith! Who can it be? We have had many Smiths here in my

time; but I really cannot call to mind any one to whom I have permitted such a degree of intimacy as to justify the familiarity of 'my dear Dean.' Still a letter from Clonmel is entitled to——. Are these persons waiting?"

This was aloud to the servant.

"Yes, sir."

"I will see them."

"Yes, sir."

Exit servant, wondering what next.

For some minutes the Dean continued to beat time with his spectacles, deaf and blind to surrounding circumstances, endeavouring to fix his memory upon the owner of the remarkable name of Smith.

"It is really very painful," he soliloquised, "very painful indeed. For the man has evidently been on terms of intimacy with me, or he would never have DARED"—(the Dean thought this word in very large capitals)—"never have DARED to take such a liberty. I do hope and trust that my mental faculties are not failing me at this important crisis of my fortunes. 'Smith—Edmund Smith!'"

A slight noise behind the Dean's chair aroused him from his abstraction. The Dean was innately a gentleman, though a pompous one, and it required no powerful introduction to induce him to receive another gentleman with urbanity. He rose from his seat, prepared his very reverend body for its most

gracious bow, turned in the direction of the doorway, and beheld——

What?

Patched, darned, and sunburnt Miles Cassidy, caubeen in hand, trembling, staring, and bowing, with two now affrighted and almost blubbering little gossoons, clinging aghast to the worn knees of his inexpressibles.

The Dean fell back a step or two, clutched the arm of his chair for support, gasped, and at last uttered a perfect yell of mingled rage and horror.

This was very unbecoming conduct on the part of a pillar of the Church, and the greatest living authority upon Greek particles. What could have induced it?

Was it because the Dean was an old bachelor, and he hated the sight of children? No.

Because he was a haughty aristocrat, and felt the vicinity of a poor man contamination? No. The Dean would not have refused a courteous hearing to a veritable beggar on reasonable grounds.

Because he had never seen a real live bogtrotter before, and he was alarmed at finding himself alone with an animal of that description? Again, no. The Dean had visited his Irish estates frequently, and was not afraid of living man or of man's enemy.

What, then, was the reason?

This. The Dean gasped, yelled, almost foamed at

the mouth, and generally misconducted himself, because his keen perceptions had descried, at the first glimpse of his strange visitors, THAT A PRACTICAL JOKE HAD BEEN PLAYED ON HIM!

All great men have their weaknesses. Our Dean's was a somewhat morbid sense of his own dignity, and a horror of ridicule. To disobey his edicts, or even negatively to fail in respect to him, he looked upon as felony. To laugh at or make game of him was a species of blasphemy so monstrous that, to be sure, it almost excused itself as a proof of insanity.

The case was plain at a glance. Some shameless undergraduates had dared to send him, the Dean, a ragged Irishman with his two brats, as a gentleman wishing to enter his sons at St. Ogive's, and were now, doubtless, gloating over the success of their scheme. Fortunately there were torments for such offenders, even upon earth!

The torrent of the Dean's blind wrath was not likely to spare the poor harmless instrument by which it had been excited.

"What do you mean by this, you scoundrel?" he thundered. "Who are you?"

"Miles Cassidy, sir," was the reply, in tones little more gentle; for Miles, too, began to scent foul play, and by no means relished this reception, "named in the letther."

"Named in the letter, you scoundrel! *You* the

gentleman from Clonmel, and those horrible brats! O Lord, somebody shall pay for this trick!"

The two brats began to pay their share already, by howling on account.

The servant had left the room. His master called to him, but he was out of hearing.

It was a terrible position for a dean to be placed in. His reverence made a tug at the bell-pull. The rope came off in his hand most provokingly, as bell-ropes have a knack of doing on critical occasions, without moving the crank.

"No matter; you shall suffer for this, you villain!"

"For what, sir?" inquired Cassidy, simply.

The Dean was a little taken aback by the question.

"For what? Do you mean to say you didn't know the contents of this letter?"

"I thought I did; but I'm thinking now I couldn't have done rightly. What's in it?"

"Can't you read?"

"No, worse luck. More-betoken, the letther was saled."

The Dean looked at it and bit his lip.

"So it is, I see. A letter of Bellerophon."

"I don't know the gentleman's name," said Cassidy, simply. "But I'd like to be paying him out for the dhirty thrick he's played off on the two of us. Me especially, I'm thinking——"

"Oh, I'll help you to do that, my man. When did you receive this?"

"An hour back, maybe."

The Dean looked at the letter again.

"What a fool I was; I might have seen the ink was fresh." (So the Dean might, some years back, before the gold spectacles came into such active requisition.) "Where?"

"At a shebeen, two mile out of this town, maybe."

"What 's a shebeen?" inquired the ignorant master of all the ancient lexicons.

"A whiskey shop, sir," Mr. Cassidy kindly explained; "a public, as they call it in these parts."

"Never mind! Tell me all about the matter."

Miles passed his hand over his stubble, in order to smooth down his ruffled ideas, and commenced:—

"You see, sir, we'd walked good eight mile—a long way for the small legs of 'em, and me wid the bundle—and the darlin's wanted a rest and a taste of the pump and hair-comb, before coming in town to face the quality——"

This was maddening. Here was the Dean of St. Ogive's not only hoaxed and bamboozled, but made a confidential party to the toilette secrets of a couple of little Irish vagrants, washed by their father at a road-side pump.

He controlled his emotions, and bade Cassidy proceed.

"Well, sir, when I was putting the finishing shine on Franky—that's Franky, sir, and the other one's Teddy, short for Edward——"

"Never mind these details, my man. To the point."

"Well, two young gentlemen in tops and buckskins—fine young fellows they were, too—the Lord forgive 'em their thoughtless thricks!—came out of the shebeen, and their horses was brought round to 'em—one of 'em as purty a blood mare as ever you set eyes on—they came out of the shebeen, and says one to me, 'Well, Pat,' says he—though my name's Miles, sorra's the harm in Pat, when it's done in good part—'is it takin' the young gentlemen to college, ye are?' 'Faix, sir,' says I, mighty surprised, 'it's odd you should have hit upon that, for it's the very thing I'm doing;' which is the Lord's truth, your honour——"

"To college! You——" The Dean stared with all his eyes. Was the man mad, or still hoaxing him?

"Sure enough, sir," Miles pursued, with perfect simplicity, "that's what's brought us here, like many a one else, I'm thinking. But I asked the gentleman by what token he found it out. Then there was some laughing and fun betwixt the pair of 'em. And says the one—'Oh,' says he, 'Pat, Oxford's a mighty fine place for larning, and there's a dale

o' folks comes here from all parts for it.' Which, indeed, I'd hard as far off as the ould place, or it's not here the three of us 'ud be this day."

The Dean's astonishment at this extraordinary avowal of *naïveté* for a moment checked his anger.

"Do you really mean to say that you have brought those children from Ireland with a view to their education in Oxford?"

"That's it, sir. And the right shop, I'm tould."

"But, my poor fellow——"

"None so poor, sir," Mr. Cassidy said, with perfect cheerfulness. "There's work here for a pair of hands as well as elsewhere, I suppose; and mine's big enough—ye'll allow that."

Mr. Cassidy displayed them. They certainly were.

The Dean did not know whether to pity or laugh at the poor man's surprising ignorance. But his anger regained possession of him.

"Go on with your story."

"Well, they got talking to me about the darlin's —and that's a tale that will always gallop off wid the tongue o' me. And afther a little more whispering atween them, says one, says he: 'Pat, yer detarmination does you honour, and I'm happy that it's in my power to recommend you to an ould gentleman as keeps a very good school in the town,—or college as we call 'em here,'—but for the matther of that, so does Pether Doolan of Kilbaggett call *his* bit of a

hedge-cabin. 'And I'll give ye a letther to him, for he's a frind of mine.' 'Thank you kindly, sir,' says I; 'but it isn't yet a bit I'll be able to afford the schoolin'.' 'Oh!' but says he, 'it's a free school. The ould man that keeps it is supported himself by the lavings of charitable people.'"

"They said that—*that?*—the shameless villains!"

"'And,' says I, 'that's the shop for *me!*'" Mr. Cassidy was getting pleased with his powers of narration, and heedless of interruptions. "And he goes into the shebeen, and comes out with the letther, and says he, 'If ye see the ould man himself, he'll be thrying to frighten ye off the place with violent language. That's a thrick of his; for he likes to keep the best places in the school open for his own friends' sons,—and, barrin' takin' a dhrop too much, it's the only fault I know till him.'"

The Dean could stand it no longer.

"The miscreants! the diabolical ruffians!"—(the remainder of the reverend gentleman's speech is unsuited to publication).

"Should you know them again?"

"Faith, and I would."

"*They* shall suffer for it. But, man, do you tell me you were ass, dolt, and pig enough to be deceived by so miserable a jest?"

"Faith, I had me doubts at furrest, for the laughing and whispering. But what the boy said afther

seemed mighty kind and raysonable. And when I found out they were both clergymen——"

"Clergymen!—what do you mean?"

"We caught a glimpse of 'em aftherwards in the town going into a house. They were off their horses that time, and had gownds and flat caps on."

"That is sufficient," said the Dean, choking with rage; "we'll soon find them out, my good fellow. You shall have your revenge, and"—the Dean hissed between his teeth in a melodramatic rather than a very reverend manner—"*I'll have mine! I'll* teach them to take liberties with a man of my status! A free school, indeed! Supported by gifts of charitable individuals! I'll rusticate them! It will be all over Oxford. I'll expel them the University! The very bed-makers know it by this time, of course! Best places for my friends' sons! *Heu mihi!* A drop too much! I'll ruin them! I'll crush them!"

The Dean appeared so terribly in earnest, and looked so remarkably vicious as he uttered this terrific burst, that Mr. Cassidy, whose own brief anger had long since oozed away, began to be apprehensive of serious consequences.

"Saving your presence, sir," he said, deferentially, "but might I be so bowld as to suggest that for a mere bit of boys' devilment and divarshin——"

"Mind your own business, fellow! I shall only want you to assist me in identifying the culprits."

Mr. Cassidy was huffed.

"Maybe I couldn't," he replied, tartly.

"You have said you would know them again."

"But if I found it was to bring ruin and throuble upon a couple of thoughtless young fellows for a mere thrick, the likes of them couldn't help playing off on the likes o' me—bedad, *I'm* fair game——"

"What then?"

"Now I think of it, sir, I don't think I *should* know 'em."

"Sirrah! do you know whom you are braving? Do you know we have stocks and cages for vagrants in this University?"

"Then sorra 's the one of me will split on a poor fellow for a dhurty threat like that," said Mr. Cassidy, in a tone of indignant disgust.

Dr. Bashawe turned white-purple, yellow, and a great many colours that were not pretty. Then he grinned unpleasantly, and said in a sarcastic tone,

"I see—we must try other inducements. You 're not such a fool as I thought you, my friend. Well, you shall be paid for your trouble. Come, I 'll give you five guineas down—upon the conviction of the offenders. Here they are."

The Doctor, in his rage, really looked upon the practical jokers as culprits of the blackest dye, and exaggerated his own authority for their punishment in proportion.

Miles Cassidy looked grave as he eyed the shining pieces.

"That 's temptin'," he said.

"Hah! I thought this method would succeed better. Your looks really belie you. Well, my friend, they 're yours, on the condition named."

"Axin' your pardon, what 'ud be the consequences to the young lads? for maybe I *do* owe 'em a turn."

"Oh, you can leave them to me," said the Dean, with an uncanny smile.

"Then, bedad, I 'll *not* lave them to you," Miles Cassidy burst out afresh, "with that ugly look on the face of you; for it 's mischief I see you mane. I 'll not take your money; and I don't care that for your threats, if you 're the pope of the place!"

The Dean was not a little astonished. But the devil had not yet gone out of him. And to be braved like this was not the way to dispose him to good thoughts and deeds. He grinned the grin of the evil spirit again, and said with disagreeable lightness,

"You are really a clever man, after all, my friend; but you *may* overdo it. But come, as a tribute to your newly-discovered talents, I will go as far as to make it ten. Beyond that we may be able to do without you. Would you like to look at the whole amount? Here it is—see!"

The Dean jingled the money in his hand, and looked very bad indeed, as he did so.

Cassidy glared painfully at the offered bribe. His brow and lips quivered. He glanced alternately from the glittering pieces to his wondering, speechless, little boys. His breath came short. It was horrible to see him, till at length he burst into a flood of tears, and with a wild cry of "Then God forgive you for tempting a poor man to do a shameful deed!" huddled up his wondering children and his packages in his arms, and rushed from the room, hiding his head away from the sight and sound of the gold.

What was this fearful commotion within the Dean of St. Ogive's bosom? It was the evil spirit taking its departure with a rush. O God! what had he been doing? Who was that man that had stood there, giving him that noble lesson, and whom he had tried to——. Oh! shame! shame! What had become of the undergraduates and their irreverent jests? Where was the outraged dignity, the terror of exposure, the raging vindictiveness? All forgotten in the bitter remorse, the burning, yearning desire to stop that man whose footsteps were flying along the old corridor, fast, faster into the distance, and who was bearing his shame—his real shame this time—to the outer world; to entreat him to return, to make him atonement, at least to implore his pardon.

A flood of this oppressive light rushed upon the Dean's rudely-awakened conscience in an instant. What was to be done to amend this wrong—to stifle this shame? Another instant, and it would be too late.

There was only one thing to be done, and the Dean did it, right manfully!

This was to scamper as fast as his very reverend legs would carry him along the old Gothic corridor, in chase of the retreating figure of Miles Cassidy; and to catch that fugitive by the coat, just as he was preparing to descend the staircase leading to the quadrangle, and to pant, abjectly, imploringly, in his astonished ears:—

"Come back, my good fellow—my dear sir—come back! I didn't exactly mean—that is, say you forgive me. Don't expose me for an old villain—or do, if you like, only come back, come back, and say you forgive me."

Yes, this surprising event really came off, and is still recorded in the unwritten annals of St. Ogive's. The betting would have been decidedly in favour of Mr. Cassidy, that gentleman being the younger man, and having a considerable start of his pursuer. It is true that Mr. Cassidy was handicapped with considerable weight, and the Dean had the advantage of a superior acquaintance with the ground. But where the latter had the real pull was in the hearty will and

honest determination with which he started on the chase. Conscience doth *not* make cowards of us all, you moony Royal Highness of Denmark! That was one of your numerous metaphysical mistakes. It makes heroes of some of us. Truly it made one of Doctor Erasmus Bashawe, when at *his* age, with *his* position, with his vanity—and let us not forget his wig, spectacles, and rheumatism—it induced him to run a heat of some thirty yards in pursuit of Miles Cassidy, for the sake of repairing an injury he felt he had done that gentleman, and to win it!

The heat was won: and Mr. Cassidy, before he had recovered from his astonishment (which, indeed, he did not quite get rid of for some weeks), found himself hustled, dragged, implored, entreated back into the Dean's apartment, which he re-entered on a very different footing from that of his late occupancy.

The little boys had, of course, been recovered as a portion of the baggage captured in the late successful sortie.

CHAPTER III.

A FRIENDLY CHAT.

FOUR or five minutes have elapsed. Miles Cassidy—now in custody, and without power of escape—is seated in the Dean's library, as near the door as he can get. His hat is under his chair, as a matter of course. (By the way, why *are* working men always so dreadfully ashamed of their hats when they come into a room? Mr. Cassidy's, to be sure, was no beauty, and required the ornament of a human countenance to make it presentable.) The family bundles are deposited in a corner. The little boys are reclining confidently and happily against their father's knees. Those unerring physiognomists have divined that the Dean is no longer a terrible personage. They are staring round them at the pictures, busts, and book-shelves with much comfortable enjoyment. They appear, in fact, quite at home.

The good Dean has wheeled his easy chair round, with its back to the window, and is contemplating his queer visitors with much interest and admiration.

On the table, by the Dean's side, is a cobwebby bottle, which the reverend gentleman has just produced from the recesses of an artfully-contrived cupboard, and uncorked. The latter important operation the Dean has, unfortunately, not been able to perform to his satisfaction. He has been sadly shaken, that poor Dean! by his recent unwonted exertions, moral and physical. It is no joke to have to beg a labouring man's pardon when you are sixty-five years of age, the head of a crack college, the greatest living authority on Greek particles, and are going to be made a bishop! The Dean's hand rocks violently as he tilts the cobwebby bottle to the proper angle over two delicate-stemmed wine-glasses, the bowls of which look like the halves of a soap-bubble, and his usually firm, sonorous voice is somewhat husky and tremulous as he says, winningly, to his visitor,—

"Glass of wine?"

"Thank you, sir," replies Mr. Cassidy, stiffly. "I 'm no drinker."

This is unkind of our friend, and the Dean feels it so, bitterly. But the Dean is doing voluntary penance, and is determined to kiss the rod—which Mr. Cassidy, for his part, has no objection to lay on pretty smartly. He has not forgiven the Dean for trying to bribe him with money to do a shabby action. His exasperation is all the greater from the

fact that the attempt was so nearly successful. He looks upon the Dean's present attempt to cajole him into amiability—by the bribes of contrition, gentleness, and hospitality—as a continuation of the same unfair treatment. So he is wary and resentful.

But the Dean is determined to conquer him this time, and has the greatest confidence in his new weapons. Amongst these, the cobwebby bottle is conspicuous in his estimation.

"If you refuse me," he says, "I shall conclude that you consider my late most unjustifiable conduct as a natural ebullition of my normal character, and not, as I pledge you my honour it was,"—the Dean recovered a little of his dignified manner as he said this, and looked as though he would become the bishopric very well indeed,—"the exceptional result of a most unusual and unwarrantable provocation."

Most of the long words in this speech were strangers to Mr. Cassidy. But he understood their drift, and made answer:—

"Don't say another word, sir. It 's disthressing to see a man in years, and a gentleman born and bred, humbling himself to the likes of *my*self. You was provoked, no doubt; though *I* can't be expected to understand such things. I 'll drink your health with pleasure, rather than you should think there 's malice."

There was no relenting in Mr. Cassidy's manner as

he said this. And had the parties been equal, this obduracy of his would have been positively abominable. But the parties were not equal. The Dean, strong in his wealth and power, had attempted to rob Miles Cassidy of his pet bit of virtue. The would-be robber had nearly had the best of it. Miles had only been able to guard his treasure by means of a rude struggle, from the blows of which he was yet smarting. He could not yet fraternise with his assailant.

"Thank you, Cassidy; that is really very kind of you. I hope and trust I have your hearty forgiveness. And I think you will find that rather a fair glass of port."

The Dean rose from his seat, and with a still trembling hand presented to his visitor one of the soap-bubble glasses filled with a tawny liquid, in which some gossamer fragments, resembling the filmy skin of an onion, were seen to float.

For a wonder, the frail crystal did not snap between the pressure of Mr. Cassidy's ample thumb and forefinger.

"My respects to you, sir, wishing you long life and happiness."

This speech was made in the same formal, unbending tones as the preceding. Cassidy put the glass to his lips. The Dean watched him narrowly.

The glass was lowered, minus half its contents.

Not a trace of emotion was visible on the countenance of the drinker.

"How do you find that?" the Dean asked, nervously.

"It 's nice tasted, sir," was the calm reply; "but I 'm no judge."

The Dean groaned inwardly.

O Miles! Miles! if you did but know the favour that has been so shamefully, so criminally wasted on you, you would then be able to appreciate the depth and sincerity of your host's contrition! Why, man! what you have been tossing in that brutal manner down your callous and uneducated throat was half a glass of THE particular old port!—the Dean's port!—for one half dozen of which there are believed to be bishops who would forfeit their mitres; a fluid that princes royal—ay, and crowned heads, coming to Oxford for their honorary degrees, have owned themselves honoured to be permitted to taste even; glasses here and there of which are so many sunny oases in the desert memories of dons and magnates; a tipple that is mentioned reverently and traditionally at undergraduate wine parties, as the joys of Mohammed's paradise might be spoken of in a circle of overworked Egyptian porters—something which it is orthodox to believe in as having an existence, but the reports of which sound rather too good to be true. Never, perhaps, in this world, was an offended pig

sought to be appeased by such a prodigal expenditure of pearls.

It was a sad blow to the Dean. But he was not a man to be easily knocked over. He recovered his guard, and prepared to hit in a fresh place.

He raised his own glass to the light, and, having forgotten Miles Cassidy and the rest of the universe for a brief second in the joys of its contemplation, placed it to his lips, saying,

"I wish you every health and happiness, my excellent friend, if you will permit me to call you so; and all success in this life and the next to my younger friends, Frank and Teddy there!"

The artful Dean! He had discovered the right spring, and pressed it. Miles Cassidy's heart flew open at once. That remembering the names of the two children was really a master-stroke.

"Thank you kindly, sir, a many times. *That's* hearty, any way." Mr. Cassidy took a second sip at the particular old port, and this time with some apparent relish.

The Dean felt he was gaining the ground he desired. He was determined to follow up his success. He beckoned to one of the urchins, who came to him in all trustfulness, folding his stumpy little arms on the Dean's knee, and looking amicably up into that gentleman's very reverend countenance.

"This, I think," said the Dean, "is Franky. Am I right?"

(The Dean, at any rate, could not make *two* false guesses.)

"No. I'm Teddy," squeaked the little fellow. "Franty's dot de trass on his arrum, and me de dimint."

The Dean looked up, puzzled and amused.

"Really that is one of the dead languages I have not yet studied. The what, my man?"

"De trass on Franty's arrum, and de dimint on mine."

"Upon my honour, you are too much for me. What does he say?"

"It 's the crass and the diamond, he says, sir," Mr. Cassidy explained; and a close observer might have noticed that his face scarcely wore its habitual ingenuousness, as he continued, "marks they 've got on their arrums, sir, for me to know 'em by. It 's frightened I was of losing them, when left alone wid 'em, poor helpless infants! having the work to go to and the troubles to the fore. Marks for the owner to know 'em by—like the lambs, sir."

(It may be observed that Mr. Cassidy did not state that *he* had affixed the marks in question. This may be worth remembering on a future occasion.)

The Dean was wonderfully delighted with having apparently secured the esteem and confidence of his

visitor; so much so, that he was cautious of abusing his privilege. Anxious to prolong the conversation, but rather at a loss what to say, he timidly hazarded the question,

"You are a widower, I presume?"

Miles Cassidy let his arms fall heavily by his sides, as he groaned rather than said,

"More than any living man on arth, I believe, sir."

"Have you a right to say that, do you think? Consider, for the sake of your own peace, in a world where sorrow is, at any rate, pretty evenly distributed, if not the counterbalancing happiness."

"Maybe so, sir; but my loss wasn't a common one, though it 's a long story that, and the telling of it hurts me. By the same token, I 'm not to brood on the sorrow, but stick to the work. That 's the bargain, that is."

"The bargain!"

"A consate of mine, sir. But come, darlin's, we 're threspassing on his honour. Good morning to you, sir, and my humble service——"

"Stay, my dear sir—my good friend. I must not allow you to leave in that manner. You are a stranger here. I have some knowledge and influence in the place. You have already been once imposed upon. I may assist your views, whatever they are; and I really owe you so much reparation. Come, tell me what are you?"

"What you see, sir; a poor Irishman with them two children on my hands."

"Yes, I perceive that—Frank and Teddy. *This* is Frank to be sure."

Miles Cassidy looked fixedly at the Dean.

"You 'd know them apart, then, sir?"

"Why, yes,"—the Dean turned a little hot at the question; it was a new subject of analysis to him,—"I scarcely think you could well mistake one for the other."

"They 're mighty like though, sir, aren't they?"

"There certainly is a resemblance," the Dean admitted.

Miles Cassidy glanced from one child to another with his habitual gaze of indecision, and murmured, in an almost despairing tone,

"They 're puzzling like!"

Then assuming a light and airy manner, by which the keen-sighted Dean was not deceived for a moment, he inquired,

"Now, which of the two would your honour pronounce the most like me?"

Under the surface of flippancy the Dean detected an almost agonised earnestness in the man's voice and manner, proving that a genuine opinion, and not an idle compliment, was what was required of him. And Doctor Bashawe of St. Ogive's, when

himself, was a man who could not descend to a lie. So he answered, in some confusion,

"Really, I do not know. I am no judge of such matters. I should rather say they both resembled their mother."

"What they all say!" was the mournful reply. "But why *both*, the blessed Virgin knows!"

The Dean winced at the mention of the blessed Virgin (an unpopular character at St Ogive's since the reign of Queen Mary), and thought it advisable to change the conversation.

"But what has really brought you to Oxford?"

"Hopes of putting the darlin's to college, sir, some day. The poor thoughtless fellows that sent me here were right so far."

The Dean felt inexpressibly sorry for the man, who seemed to him to have committed a heroic blunder.

"My poor fellow, I am afraid you have been misled as to the nature of an Oxford education."

"How, sir? It's the first in the land, I'm towld."

"Undoubtedly—or in the world!"

"Hooroo!" said Mr. Cassidy, interjectionally.

"But a University training is only suited to the sons of noblemen or men of property."

"That's it, sir; we're right. That's what they're to have. It's in the bargain, that is."

"But there are insurmountable obstacles."

"Don't say that, sir. What, like?"

"In the first place, the cost."

"There you may help me, sir; and I'd take it as a favour. What might that be, if I may make so bowld?"

Mr. Cassidy deposited his hat, which he had resumed possession of, once more beneath his chair, and disposed himself for listening.

The Dean, dreadfully astonished at his own condescension (for it was the dignity of St. Ogive, and not of himself, that he was now compromising), found himself enlightening his odd visitor as to the quality and expense of an University education. He taught Miles what an exhibition meant, and how presentations were obtainable. He gave that apparent monomaniac to understand, how that in the event of his sons obtaining a footing as students of the University, the circumstances of their obscure birth would entail many disadvantages upon them. In a word, he exerted his far from mean powers of eloquence to dissuade his visitor from the prosecution of what seemed to him the wildest of insane freaks.

Miles heard him throughout, attentively, with an unmoved countenance. When the Dean had finished, he asked,—

"But the taching itself, sir—is it as good for the poor scholards as the rich?"

"Unquestionably, with diligence on the part of the pupil."

"I'll keep 'em to that, sir, never fear."

"But they would acquire expensive and ambitious tastes, from association with the sons of the wealthy classes."

"Bedad, I'll forgive 'em if they do, when I'm by. It's the taching aiqual to the first in the land—that's the bargain. Thank you kindly, sir, and a many times over. You're the best friend Miles Cassidy's known this many a day, afther all. I see my way clear now. It's a hape of money to raise by the sweat of one's brow; but, with the Lord's blessing, I'll raise it."

"This is a strange whim of yours, my friend."

"Don't say that, sir. It's no whim. It's a promise sworn to the blessed Virgin by the bedside of them that's gone."

The Dean winced again. There was one matter that really required explanation. Was Miles aware that the English Universities were open exclusively to members of the National Church?

Faith, Miles knew all about it! He himself had been trained in the old religion. But "them that's gone" had been of the new one. Anyhow, he believed the boys would have been brought up in the latter creed—for he would always have "given in in them matters." He himself rather weakened his

prestige in the Dean's estimation, by the confession of extreme laxity as to doctrinal religion. He had an Irishman's chivalrous devotion to the Virgin; but he admitted that "sorra 's the good he 'd ever got out of the priests," to whom he attributed many of the recent "throubles," the immediate cause of his present bereavement and perplexities,—which the Dean was too delicate to inquire more closely into, noticing an obvious desire on the part of Miles to keep them secret.

Miles rose for his final apology and adieu to his entertainer.

The Dean fumbled in his pockets, looked more nervous than ever, and blushed a blush, with which the particular old port had nothing whatever to do.

"Hum! ha!—my friend—pardon me, but after what has passed between us—so eminently to my discredit—I feel it would be an insult to offer you pecuniary assistance——"

"Right there, sir," put in Mr. Cassidy, approvingly; "you couldn't do it, in coorse."

"But still, if you could put me in the way of serving you. I have some means and influence——"

Mr. Cassidy thrust his hand into the recesses of his canvas shirt, from which he produced an old stocking, which he opened precipitately on to the Dean's writing table, displaying some forty guineas in gold, with a good deal of silver.

"You see, sir, it ain't that: for good two years' living we 're safe. For it 's me that makes, mends, darns, and washes for the boys. And there 's a thousand things I can do—carpentering, joining, and the like,—tailoring and waving, too, for that matter. Handy Miles I was called in the ould place. Never fear for me, sir; and thank you kindly for the words of comfort you 've spoken. It was a hard trial to get here; but I heard it was the place of places, where I could keep my oath to them that 's gone. I had sore misgivings on the way, but you 've set me right, sir. It 's to be done now, praised be the blessed Virgin, saving your presence."

The Dean was beginning to whimper. Deservedly ashamed of this tendency, he said,—

"Have another glass of wine."

"Thank ye kindly, no, sir. I 'll have to give up the noggin. The pipe I 'll have to stick to; for I can't do my bit o' thinking without it, and the boys will want a dale of that to help 'em along. Save you, sir, and God bless you! Come, darlin's!"

"Stop!—ah, Cassidy!"

"Your honour?"

"Would you mind doing me a favour?"

"Sorra 's the bit, sir," said Mr. Cassidy, affably; "any thrifling bit of a job I can do for yez without charge——"

"Thank you, my dear fellow, thank you—but

what I wanted to ask of you was a shake of the hand. *Will* you oblige me?"

"*And* welcome," said Mr. Cassidy, wringing the Dean's hand with benign condescension. If he had been a king, he could not have forgiven the poor Dean more magnificently than he did.

"Thank you—thank you; I am exceedingly obliged to you; and I hope you will let me know how you are getting on. Above all, take care of my two young freshmen here,"—the Dean here smuggled certain silver coins into the hands of the two boys, a proceeding which Mr. Cassidy felt it the humane thing not to object to—"I'll make archbishops of them yet."

"Thank you kindly, sir," Mr. Cassidy said, grandly. "I don't mane them for the clargy."

"Never mind that—we part good friends—don't we?"

"Oh, *surr!*" Mr. Cassidy waved his shockingest of bad hats with a bow that many marquises would be glad to imitate.

The Dean was left alone. He sank into his arm-chair, and nursed his treble chin in his hands.

"How excessively singular!" he murmured; "how excessively singular! And how eminently ridiculous for a man in my position! But how remarkably interesting!"

I think, if the worthy Dean troubled himself at all

about Greek literature for the next half hour, it must have been to dwell upon certain trite passages about Hector and Andromache, and the little child whom the Trojan warrior kissed before going into unequal battle; or about Wise Ulysses, with all his wisdom at fault, wandering over unknown seas at the mercy of the Destinies—but with the memory of a chaste Penelope and the hope of a blooming Telemachus cheering him on his voyage. Or he may have murmured over a passage in a later work, portions of which were also originally written in the Hellenic language—the familiar English translation whereof is, "Suffer little children to come unto me!"

And it is not at all improbable that, when the Dean again put on the famous gold-rimmed spectacles to look at a Greek particle through them, he found the lenses a little dim!

CHAPTER IV.

A BIT HERE AND A SCRAP THERE.

Mr. Cassidy took up his abode in Oxford, where he and his little boys speedily became popular characters. The latter were at once accepted by public acclamation, and as a permanency, by the Dean's good-humoured nickname of "the freshmen;" and a nickname in an English University city is a very great step towards celebrity. Mr. Cassidy himself was no less fortunate in this important respect; he became known indiscriminately as "Cassidy the Irish" and "Mad Cassidy." His singular ambition to educate his sons as gentlemen was held by the majority as clear proof of insanity. It was observed, however, that people who had happened to have pecuniary dealings with Mr. Cassidy were by no means inclined to subscribe to the popular opinion on this subject. These were disposed to pronounce our friend a person in the full possession of his intellectual faculties—certainly as regarded a just appreciation of pounds, shillings, and pence.

The circumstances of Mr. Cassidy's matriculation,

so to speak, in the University, were most favourable. A man who had not only been a party to the famous practical joke—conspicuous from its isolation rather than from its brilliancy—upon old Bashawe of St. Ogive's, but who had actually refused large bribes rather than inform upon its original perpetrators, could not fail to earn the esteem and patronage of undergraduate circles. In Oxford "not to split" ranks among the cardinal virtues; and Mr. Cassidy's honourable conduct in this respect was soon made public. The Dean took a lively pleasure in telling the story wherever he went; and, of course, the delighted authors of the joke could not themselves keep the secret, which Mr. Cassidy had so magnanimously, and at so great a sacrifice, striven to keep for them. And it may be remarked, by the way, that these young humourists bragged of their success once too often. The Dean, to whose ears their share in the transaction had come by a hundred different channels, was at last fatigued into taking some cognisance of it; and astonished the young gentlemen one morning by rusticating them for a couple of terms, in consideration of their famous pleasantry,—"not," as he dryly observed, "that he himself could not afford to be generous under a defeat, but he thought his conquerors required a lesson in the difficult art of supporting a victory." At the same time, they were informed that they were indebted to

Mr. Cassidy, and the Dean's high regard for that gentleman's feelings, for the extreme leniency of their sentence. So that these undergraduates (and their order for them) felt gratefully towards Mr. Cassidy, even at the time of his acting indirectly as the instrument of their disgrace. Like Giaffar in the Eastern tale, the mere recollection of his virtues was the means of saving men sentenced to punishment for the crime of having been his accomplices. Except that Giaffar lost his head, and Mr. Cassidy took remarkably good care not to lose his, on any known occasion the parallel would be singularly striking.

The particular line of business in which Mr. Cassidy made his Oxford *début* would be rather difficult of definition. He engaged premises in Fisher Row, consisting of an unfurnished back-room about eight feet by eleven in dimensions. His occupancy, after a few days' residence, was signified by a diminutive deal board bearing this legend:—

the real significance of which was that Mr. Cassidy would be very happy to undertake any commission in the joining or plastering lines, if he could get it to do. But as a guarantee that the advertiser possessed a single tool, article of stock, or, indeed, important technical qualification for either of the pursuits alluded to, the inscription must be pronounced, to say the least, apocryphal. The fact is, Mr. Cassidy was willing to attempt anything or everything that was tolerably well paid and not dishonourable. And as he was diligent, ingenious, enormously strong, and had been fortunate enough to make good friends, he found no difficulty in disposing of his time to pretty good advantage. He would dig, mow, saw, paint (he never got beyond a shop-door in this branch of the arts), and, on an emergency, officiate as extra stable-keeper, or even day-waiter. It was a sight, in the latter case, to see Mr. Cassidy in a shocking bad suit of hired black, and with a deplorably-tied cravat, his brawny fists crammed into the cheapest and worst of Berlin gloves, committing havoc among the plates and glasses. The only condition he stipulated for beyond his pay—which he was rather clever at fixing at a pretty good rate, and remarkably sharp in looking after—was that the labour he engaged for should not be such as to necessitate his separation from "the darlin's." This was considered a bit of a nuisance at first, but Mr.

Cassidy's employers got used to it as a matter of regulation; and the little fellows were trained, like docile terriers, to dispose themselves quietly in the most out-of-the-way corners till the day's work was finished. If you saw Mr. Cassidy stalking solitary through a meadow, mowing away like grim Death, you might be sure "the freshmen" were not far off; you would find them chasing butterflies in the adjacent field, or comfortably coiled up like the hireling shepherd of the mystic nursery legend, that we wondered at long before Mr. Holman Hunt was old enough to astonish us with his marvellous view of the same subject,

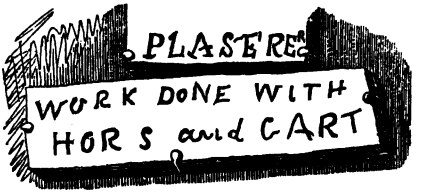
"Under a haycock, fast asleep."

If, on the occasion of a great boat-race, cricket match, or other *al fresco* entertainment, the adroit official who brought you anchovy sauce to your fruit-pie, or spilt your bottle of porter between your shirt and waistcoat-lining, turned out to be Mr. Cassidy, you might be sure that little Frank and Teddy were at hand, stowed away safely somewhere among the adjacent tubs and hampers.

As a rule, Miles objected to work by the day or the hour; he preferred such occupations as could be paid for "by the piece." Quite reasonably, too, as with his gigantic frame and incredible industry he often managed to get through two ordinary men's work.

His good friend the Dean never lost sight of him (till Oxford lost sight of the Dean), and was constantly devising lucrative employment for him. He would gladly have engaged Miles as a private servant in some capacity, having a high respect for the man, and feeling the greatest confidence in his truthfulness and ability. But such offers Miles always respectfully declined. "He must stick to the darlin's —it was part of the bargain—thanking his reverence for past favours, and hoping to desarve the same; but he thought 'he saw his way!'" The Dean soon began to understand that Cassidy's aims were high ones; and considerately preferred to assist him in their fulfilment—in Miles's own chosen way.

In the course of time another little sign-board was added to the original one (to which it was the worst fit imaginable) thus:—



This also was a pious fraud. It is true that Mr. Cassidy, having picked up a pair of old wheels a very great bargain, had, in his few leisure moments, manufactured what he was imaginative enough to consider a cart. Few were entirely of his way of

thinking on this subject. Horseflesh Mr. Cassidy had none; but when the vehicle, for which no adequate name exists, did happen to be called into active requisition, its proprietor always knew where to engage something, alive and on four legs, to draw it on (to him) most advantageous terms.

Of course, by dint of so much varied exertion, our hero began to find out his real vocation. This, after all—the ignominious cart notwithstanding—really turned out to be carpentering. Mr. Cassidy, after repeated *fiascos*, achieved a real success in the book-shelf line—a commission from his untiring patron the Dean. This was really a creditable performance, but scarcely such as to warrant the intolerable airs assumed by its author on the supposed strength of its merits. But Miles was a capital trumpeter on his own instrument, and was not the man to spare his mighty lungs, if he saw a chance of collecting a profitable crowd about him. He managed to pile up a great reputation upon that one set of book-shelves. Further commissions, the result of this triumph, enabled him to remove to more commodious premises—the master of a pretty good stock of tools and materials. This degree of progress, however, was only attained subsequently to some events that must here be chronicled.

The minor occupations above recorded were mere preparatory diggings, as it were, for the great Cassidy

edifice. Considering that Miles was not only his own architect, but would also have to be his own brickmaker, bricklayer, and hodman, it is not surprising that he should have been anxious to commence building in good time. An opportunity for laying his foundation-stone presented itself a few months after his arrival in Oxford.

The front-room of the house in Fisher Row was tenanted by a lock-keeper, or rather by his wife, such of the husband's time as was not required at the lock being chiefly devoted to the beer-house. This was an unfortunate distribution; for, having one day overstayed his time at the beer-house, the man walked out of it, rather hurriedly, into the lock, and was drowned. His widow, a poor, helpless creature, finding herself deprived of even the scanty means of subsistence she had been able to wring from the deceased—which may have appeared to her more abundant than it really was, from the plentiful sauce of kicks and oaths with which each scrap had been accompanied — was reduced to despair. She had scarcely an article of clothing or furniture to dispose of for the price of a meal for herself and two young infants. She had no friends, had learnt no occupation, and was too weakly and delicate for rough manual exertion.

Miles Cassidy, ever on the watch for opportunity, saw the means of turning this poor creature's

calamity to his and her own advantage. He had ascertained, it should be stated, that the woman was a "scholard"—that is to say, she had learnt to read and write—having been, indeed, the spoiled child of some petty tradespeople with whom the world had fared badly. He also knew her to be a thoroughly simple-minded, truthful, and kindly-disposed person. He paid her a neighbourly visit on the second day of her bereavement, making his excuse the offering of some wisely-chosen sixpennyworth or so of material comfort, which was most gratefully accepted.

He found the poor widow, who was named Quelch —not a very pretty name, but a great many natives of Oxfordshire are obliged to bear it—absolutely beside herself with grief and apprehension, neither of the most selfish or unreasonable description. She had loved the dead-and-gone brute, who had left her with no legacy but a pair of sickly children and a black eye, and was alarmed for the future of her offspring, on whose behalf she felt herself so powerless to struggle with the world. What was to become of them? Why had her dear Tom left her? Could she hope to be forgiven for having ever complained of his rough treatment, now that she found herself so lonely and helpless without him? Why had she not been a better wife, and made a better home for him? What would poor father and mother have said had they lived to see her come to this?

Such were the principal notes of her mournful song, the constantly-recurring burden of which was, "What will become of these helpless, fatherless angels?"

Mr. Cassidy listened to a few repetitions of this lament with respectful patience, brushing his short hair with the palm of his hand—or, perhaps it would be more accurate to say, brushing the palm of his hand with his short hair.

At the first convenient lull he looked up at the dilapidated ceiling, and said, as in soliloquy,

"Well, that bangs Banagher, anyhow! But it's the throuble that blinds her, the crathur! Nath'ral, too, and proper."

"You may say that, Mr. Cassidy. I am blinded, indeed, by my trouble."

"Ah! in a day or two ye'll have your eyes open, ma'am; and ye'll see your way clearer than ever ye saw it before."

"Oh, Mr. Cassidy, you mean kindly by saying so, I am sure! But what is to become of these helpless darlings? What can I do?"

"Well, ma'am, if I might make so bould, I should rather ask, What *can't* you do?" said Mr. Cassidy, looking keenly in the widow's face as he spoke. "That's nearer the mark. A born lady, with your resources and accomplishments, *and with her hands untied!*"

A faint gleam of pleasure stole over the wan features of the widow, awakened by this delicate touch of flattery. But it is to be feared she mistook the purport of her visitor's hint, as she burst out afresh into passionate exclamations of—

"Oh, I would never marry again, Mr. Cassidy! Never! Nothing should induce me to forget my poor Tom, if I was to live a hundred years!"

Mr. Cassidy with some difficulty repressed a chuckle. He was immensely tickled with the idea that this forlorn specimen of widowhood—whom no *two* men in the most imbecile generation would be likely to commit the grave mistake of marrying—had possibly suspected him, Miles Cassidy, of matrimonial designs on her singularly unattractive person! But he preserved his gravity admirably, and resumed,

"Ye'll plaze yourself as to that, ma'am, of coorse. And maybe, after one unlucky venture—no disrespect to the dead, pace to their sowls!—ye'll enjoy your freedom too well to part with it a second time. And when you find yourself earning your living as a lady should, and putting by money for them fine chaps there,"—pointing to two of the most repulsive-looking children in the world,—"with no one to rob you of your little savings——. But I ax your pardon, ma'am, for threspassing on your private matthers."

The poor woman's eyes and mouth were agape with astonishment.

"Oh, Mr. Cassidy!" she said, "what *do*'ee mean? *Me* earn my living as a lady! I *was* brought up superior, I own; but poor father and mother wouldn't let me do anything, being delicate from a child; not even housework. More's the pity, or poor Tom mightn't have been drove so often to the Lamb and Flag! If they'd only learnt me as much as shoe-binding——"

"Shoe-binding!" Mr. Cassidy exclaimed, in a tone of ineffable disgust. "With the larning you've got at your fingers' ends! Well, that bates all! But you're not yourself, anyhow!"

Mr. Cassidy's drift was not yet visible, but his flattery was irresistible.

"It's little good my learning has ever done me, Mr. Cassidy," said the widow, softly.

"Then now's about the time to make it, *I* think," said Miles, in cheery tones, lighting a pipe as he spoke.

"What would you advise me to try?"

"Try!" Mr. Cassidy looked up as though he were indignant at being asked such a question. "Keep a school, *of coorse!*"

"A school! me!"

"You. Who else?"

A delighted smile illumined the poor woman's face; her bosom was in a strange flutter. No wonder; it had just been suddenly invaded by three

unwonted and unexpected spiritual visitors. These were, Hope, Ambition, and Self-approval—perfect strangers to Mrs. Quelch for many years past.

"Oh, Mr. Cassidy, if I only thought I was fit for it!"

"You was born for it, and bred for it, ma'am. Don't tell me. I'm no scholard myself, but I know one when I see one."

Mrs. Quelch was so overwhelmed by the novel theory of her being possibly fit for anything in this world that she could scarcely speak. Eventually she faltered,

"Poor father and mother did spend a deal of money on my schooling, and I was considered to write a beautiful hand."

"Aiqual to any," said Mr. Cassidy, decisively—as a connoisseur of the caligraphic art.

"But I haven't practised for years. The last bottle of ink I got to write to my sister in service, poor Tom threw at —— I mean, he let it fall, because there was no butter in the house."

"It will soon come back, ma'am."

"Do you think so? But, deary me, I'm sure I shouldn't know how to begin! And what should I do for desks, and forms, and things?"

Cassidy pretended not to have foreseen this difficulty, and to admit that it was discouraging. But he suggested, "Maybe you've a friend that would advance a thrifle to start you?"

"Not a friend in the wide, wide world! If poor father and mother had lived——"

Miles affected to ruminate deeply on a question upon which he had made up his mind hours ago. At length, appearing to have come to a difficult conclusion, he slapped his thigh heartily, and said, with a magnificent air,

"Then I'll tell ye what, ma'am. *I'll* stand your friend, as far as making you the forrums and desk goes. And I'll take the price of 'em out in schoolin, for my own darlin's. And if ye've a better-looking pair of chaps than them to bring custom, I'll forgive you."

"Oh, Mr. Cassidy, that is very, very kind of you!" said the poor woman, tearfully; "and I can't find words to thank you for such an offer! If poor father and mother had——. But I haven't a rag to my back but what you see. The place isn't fit for decent children to come into. And how are these two blessed, beautiful angels to live, while I'm trying to make a beginning?"

This was another difficulty that, of course, Mr. Cassidy had not foreseen. He was dreadfully put out of the way by this. He frowned deeply, put his hands to his pockets, shook his head hopelessly. At last he rose from his seat, and with some pardonable assumption of oratorical grace and dignity, addressed his hostess in the following measured terms:

"Mrs. Quelch, ma'am. Times is mighty hard, and I 'm a poor struggling man myself, with childher of my own to provide for. But it shall never be said that Miles Cassidy"—a majestic wave of the hand emphasised this most original burst of rhetoric splendour—"was the boy to spoil a ship for the want of a hayporth of tar. I 've a few tinpennies by me: mighty few, you may believe me. But rather than a lady like yourself should miss a fine chance of making her way in the world, why, ma'am, if nobody else will advance you what 's needful for a small beginning, *I* will, and that 's all about it!"

Mr. Cassidy then sat down, highly satisfied.

The poor widow became hysterical with surprise and gratitude.

"May the holy angels bless you, sir!" she sobbed. "These darlings shall be taught to pray for you night and morning. I couldn't have believed in so much goodness."

"Don't spake of it, ma'am, or you 'll disthress me," said the modest Cassidy—(by the way, on second thoughts, I am not quite sure that modesty *was* one of Mr. Cassidy's numerous virtues. I am inclined to think, on the contrary, he had rather a good opinion of himself than otherwise). "Sure, ye 'll pay me all one day."

"Oh! if it was to work the flesh off my bones on my two bended knees."

"Be aisy, ma'am, and you 'll oblige me."

"Oh! if poor father and mother *was* but alive——"

The interview was not of much longer duration. Miles Cassidy was as good as his word. He advanced Mrs. Quelch a small sum, cutting down his estimate of "what was needful" to the closest imaginable shave. He also made her two hideous forms and a highly impracticable desk—evidently of the same family as the shameful cart. More than this, he exerted his considerable powers of blarney among the neighbours to induce them to give their children the advantages of Mrs. Quelch's tuition. He recommended that instructress most highly, urging in proof of his estimation of her abilities, that he had not merely intrusted his own sons to her care, but had considered her speculation such a safe one, as to feel justified in investing capital for the furnishing her with a stock-in-trade to begin with.

Mrs. Quelch soon had an abundance of scholars, and prospered far beyond her humble expectations. She taught Frank and Teddy to read and write, pretty well considering; her boundless gratitude to her benefactor inducing her to exercise her poor resources to the utmost for the advancement of his children. Moreover, Miles kept her pretty closely to her work.

Mrs. Quelch professed herself, and with justice, eternally bound to Miles Cassidy. She paid him back

the money he had advanced her, and was reluctantly prevailed upon to accept the marvellous forms and desk as payment for her scholastic exertions. With these interesting relics she sentimentally declared she would never part as long as she lived,—a resolution highly to the credit of Mrs. Quelch's nature; and the only thing to be regretted is that it was not evoked by a neater and more commodious style of keepsake.

Miles was perfectly satisfied with his bargain.

Our hero speedily divined when his young charges had learnt all and rather more than Mrs. Quelch could teach them. He then looked out for higher tuition for them, to be obtained on proportionate reasonable terms. By this time he had managed to scrape together a somewhat heterogeneous collection of furniture sufficient to stock a couple of rooms. He took a small house in a more reputable, but still a poor, quarter of the town. Here he advertised "Apartments Furnished: suited to a Member of the University."

He was not long in finding a poor student of one of the halls who was glad, in exchange for his lodgings and the privilege of "doing for himself" (inestimably more valuable in the eyes of a needy lodger than that of being "done for"), backed by a very small weekly stipend, to devote a little time each evening to the education of the boys. Miles was fortunate in his

selection; or rather, perhaps, his native judgment had assisted him in rejecting all unsuitable candidates till the right man presented himself. The tutor was an intelligent, well-informed, conscientious man, and, moreover, an enthusiast in the cause of letters. He soon took an interest in his pupils, whom he found quick and affectionate, and one of them, Frank, of a remarkably studious turn. He gave them a great deal more education, and that of a far higher quality, than their father had bargained for.

Our hero (for though the youngsters will speedily rise and push him from the stool of eminence he at present occupies in our attention, Miles Cassidy will continue, if you please, to monopolise that distinction to the end of all these chapters) was by this time fully recognised in Oxford as "Cassidy the Carpenter." The bookshelf success had effaced the scandal of the cart, and Miles was now in a tolerably good way of business. He kept his own horse—well, yes, it *was* a horse—and employed one journeyman and two apprentices. A word or two as to these personages.

The journeyman was one of Miles's cheap bargains. Really Mr. Cassidy was a perfect Molière in the art of picking up his bread wherever he saw it lying. So long as it was a good wholesome loaf, and nobody else's property, he never cared how much he soiled his fingers in clearing its outer crust from the mud. This journeyman of his he had "formed," as the

French say, out of the rather unpromising materials of a town idiot. The transmutation, as far as it went —for it was never completely successful—was effected as follows.

Miles rescued the poor wretch one day from a gang of street urchins—who were tormenting him, on the usual grounds in such cases, of his being poor, ragged, hungry, and imbecile, and frightening him out of the sorry remnant of his wits—took him indoors and gave him a meal, out of pure charity, without ulterior views. Then reflecting that this "one more unfortunate," when once more turned into the streets, would be in exactly the same position as that from which he had been temporarily rescued, Miles set to work considering how he could remedy the poor fellow's condition, on his invariable principle of reciprocal advantage. Our friend, without being at all aware of it, was an admirable political economist. He was a practical advocate of the principle that every war should pay its own expenses; and was of opinion that all domestic cats, in consideration of the house-room and protection afforded them, should at least be capable of catching mice. At any rate, *he* could not afford to keep a cat for the mere pleasure of seeing it lap expensive cream. The question was, had this unlucky stray kitten a single claw, tooth, or feeler that could be turned to musciverous advantage? In plainer words, was

there anything the poor homeless idiot could do to justify his retention and support on the establishment? Apparently not; but the question could only be decided by experiment. It was agreed that "Soft Jimmy" should be tolerated for a day or two on trial. It was rather a forlorn hope. On the first day Jimmy did nothing but eat, laugh, drivel, and make pretty arrangements of the shavings. On the second—which was to be his last in the event of his turning out wholly impracticable—he showed a certain canine willingness and intelligence in the arts of fetching and carrying. This was something, though by no means satisfactory. Still it gained him another day's probation. On the third day Miles, having directed him to fetch a small piece of wood from a corner of the workshop, Jimmy, mistaking the article wanted, shouldered a large trunk of rough timber, which Cassidy himself could scarcely have lifted, and brought it with comparative ease to his patron's feet. This discovery made "Soft Jimmy's" fortune for the rest of his days. He had physical strength—almost the last gift his ill-knit, shambling figure would have gained him credit for—and docility. These were enough for Miles Cassidy. "Soft Jimmy" remained attached to the establishment as a sort of engine or beast of burden, to be directed by the intelligence of his master. Jimmy was, henceforth and for ever, well fed and housed.

He was taught to dress cleanly, shave himself, and so forth, and was flattered by being treated as a human being. Well, Jimmy strove to repay this unwonted treatment. He seemed to live only in Miles Cassidy's smiles. He strained his feeble intellects to learn something of the rougher parts of the carpenter's trade. What he lacked in skill he made up in will and strength. He was only unhappy when there were no great weights to lift or masses to move. He was jealous of only one living being,—that was the horse, whom he looked upon as a dangerous rival in his own limited department. Perhaps he would have ill-treated the animal but for the dread of his master's displeasure. Jimmy, though there was no getting over the fact that he was an idiot, possessed many valuable qualifications for a servant. He was remarkably cheap, for he took no wages, and slept among the shavings—for which graceful waifs and strays he had a remarkable predilection at all times. He was as strong as a horse—certainly as strong as Miles Cassidy's horse, and knew no will but his master's. If Miles Cassidy had chosen the burking, instead of the carpentering profession, Jimmy would have clapped on the pitch-plasters, and carried home the sacks to the customers, fearlessly and unquestioningly. Rather a dangerous instrument to have fallen into less trustworthy hands!

So much for Miles Cassidy's first attempt at a

journeyman. His two apprentices were people of a very different calibre. These were no others than our friends Frank and Teddy, whom their father made buckle to business with a rare will, as soon as either was able to wield a hammer. Miles would have the boys no exception to his excellent rule of making everything pay its own expenses. He early impressed them with a sense of the value of the education they were receiving, which he enhanced, in their esteem, by the assurance that they themselves were assisting him to pay for it. What boy will not take a pride in that which he feels is *his own* by right of honest earning? The way those lads set to work with their hammers and chisels to earn their daily—grammar! was something curious and delightful. It is a pity, perhaps, that such a system of education cannot be more universally applied.

Frank was the better scholar, and Ted the better workman. Frank was always a little glad of a "slack time," that enabled him to leave the workshop and get to his favourite books. On the other hand, nothing pleased Ted better than an extra run of work, that gave him an excuse for shirking his lessons and exercises. Still, as the end and aim of all their exertions was their father's approval, and as they knew his mind to be set on their both succeeding equally in each branch of their tuition, for some time they

managed to run pretty evenly. Frank, who was thoughtful and conscientious, would at any time lay aside his studies for days together on a necessity, and work cheerfully at the bench, without letting it appear that he did so at all reluctantly. Ted, who was impulsive and conscientious, if he found that complaints of his backwardness from Mr. Partickle had earned his father's displeasure, would set to work, with the ardour of an oft-plucked undergraduate cramming for his "Greats," to recover lost time. Ted seldom recovered *all* his lost time, by-the-by; but the portions of it he did manage to get back were won by such praiseworthy exertions, that the will was always taken for the deed.

While Mr. Cassidy thus provided for the *utile* in his sons' education, it must not be supposed that he lost sight of the *dulce*. Let us see how he managed to secure the elements of this.

One morning, as our energetic friend was getting over the stones of Queen Street at his usual tremendous pace, he was accosted by Mr. Spavin, the eminent horse-dealer and stable-keeper.

"Morning, Cassidy—morning."

"The tip top of it, Misther Spavin, sir, and my sarvice to you."

"How's the freshmen?"

"Nicely, sir, and thank you kindly. Hoping the misthress and children are famous."

"Won't you wash your mouth out?" Mr. Spavin moved in the direction of the Goat and Gradus as he spoke.

"Not this morning, if ye plaze, sir. I've a bit of a job that's waitin'. But thank you kindly, Mr. Spavin, sir, for it's like you."

"I say—a minute, Cassidy—business."

Miles stopped at once.

"How about that drench?"

"Which one, sir?"

"Gammon! *Which* one? You know as well as I do. The one you gave the Dean's mare."

"Faix, and I hope it's done her no harrum—the cratur!" Miles looked really alarmed.

"Get out! You know as well as I do it's set her on her old pins as right as ninepence, to the astonishment of all the 'vets' in Oxford. Come! My time's valuable as well as yours. How much?"

"Surr-r?"

"Don't try to come the innocent over me, you old fox! How much for the receipt? I could find out what it's made of well enough, only I don't want to have it thought I stole a man's secret. Come, will a *coutar* buy it?"

Mr. Spavin spun up a sovereign as he spoke.

"Oh, get out o' that, Misther Spavin! Would I be robbing you? Sure, I'll make ye up a bottle any time for eighteenpence—the cost of the mata-

rials. It 's a thriflin' matter I larnt in Squire Rackrent's stables—him in Galway, you know, as run through——"

"Stow that. You 're as fly as a four-year-old, I see. Will a fiver buy it? Snug—between ourselves, you know. Honour bright!"

"Och, *sir!*" (Mr. Cassidy said this very reproachfully), "is it *me* would be taking yer money? Sure, you 're kindly welkim to it, if of the slightest sarvice."

"I 'm sure I 'm very much obliged, Cassidy; and if there 's anything I can do for you——"

"Oh, don't name it, sir! Sure, many 's the good turn you 've done me in the slack time. Though, since ye are so kind as to spake of it, there 's a thrifling sarvice ye *can* do me, for which I shall be humbly grateful, and which 'll cost ye nothing, Mr. Spavin, sir."

"I thought something was coming, old fire-works! Blaze away!"

"Och, by this and that, you 're the man for pokin' fun, Mr. Spavin, sir! It was only to say the two boys, the Lord bless 'em! are mighty confined with the work and the schoolin'; and it 'ud do the darlin's a world o' good if ye 'd let them give some of your tits an airing of a morning, now and betimes—them not in use, of coorse—it 'ud save your own boys, you know."

"All right, old fellow! I 'll give the freshmen a

mount now and then, if you want 'em to learn riding. Most happy, I 'm sure. Could you send me the receipt this afternoon?"

"The what, sir?"

"The receipt for the mixture."

"Rest your sowl, sir, I can neither read nor write! I couldn't tell another man how to make it for the life-blood o' me. It 's the knack, sir. Sorra the bit else. But I 'm always hard by, sir. And if ye 'll only give the darlin's a bit of horse exercise now and then, *sure I'll make up the mixthur', and come an' administer it myself as often as four times a-week, if you like.*"

Mr. Spavin was vanquished, which he didn't like. But Miles Cassidy's horse-medicine (whether of any real merit or not) had already obtained some celebrity in Oxford, and had been frequently asked for. So the stable-keeper was fain to conclude the bargain on Mr. Cassidy's artful terms. He would have preferred giving the "fiver."

Thus Miles Cassidy provided the boys with the means of becoming accomplished horsemen, at the same time retaining his patent of the famous horse-mixture. Many a morning canter the lads enjoyed on Mr. Spavin's unemployed steeds up Headington Hill, or across Port Meadow, Mr. Cassidy himself, who was a fearless "bare-backed rider," officiating as their *Maître d'Equitation.*

He was a very ignorant man, Mr. Cassidy. He could barely recognise the initials of his own name in print. Yet somehow he managed to put his two darlings in the way of acquiring a variety of knowledge, that many doctors of divinity would have been rather puzzled even to indicate an approach to. When Ted and Frank were twelve years old, they could each swim a quarter of a mile comfortably. They could master the most vicious horse. They could shoot swift birds on the wing. (I occasionally suspect that Mr. Cassidy must have had some practice in galloping on stolen nags away from constables, and in firing at yeomanry officers from behind hedges, in those wicked old United Irish times of "Ninety-Eight;" else how came he to be such a horseman and such a shot?) They could defend themselves stoutly when attacked by lads vastly their superiors in weight and age. More than all these capital attainments, they could earn their own livelihood, love one another, honour their elders, and forgive an injury. Where had Mr. Cassidy—himself of so suspicious an origin —even heard of all these good things, that he could enable others to master them? Can it be that a powerful, sudden, soul-stirring sentiment could have impelled a rough, simple man to divine how all this and more might be done, and to do it resolutely and thoroughly, dispensing with the ordinary helps to knowledge, as an excited blind man will sometimes

rush with unerring precision along a strange road to a desired goal, with a supreme contempt for the commonplace guide of eyesight? Or am I telling a simply improbable story? You shall tell me what you think when you have read it.

Drawing was one of the accomplishments which Mr. Cassidy had ascertained to be a desirable adjunct to a gentlemanlike training. He had booked this in his mental tablets as a branch from the tree of learning to be secured "on the cheap" at the earliest opportunity. The opportunity was long in presenting itself; but it fell in his way at last.

Miles was at work one day repairing a boat on the bank of the river, near the deep water below Folly Bridge. Two young townsmen on the river were apparently bent upon finding him further employment of a similar description, such dreadful tricks they were playing with a hired "pair-oar," which neither of them knew how to manage. They upset the boat, and both disappeared under water. One rose to the surface, and swam the short distance to the bank with some difficulty. The other would never have been seen alive again, had not Miles Cassidy dived to his rescue and brought him ashore—more frightened than hurt.

The young fellow's gratitude to his preserver was immense. But he said, with a rueful countenance, that he was very poor; and, indeed, he looked so.

"Never mind, sir," said Miles, a little disappointed, perhaps—for he never refused what an exquisitely-refined patron of mine prettily calls "the nimble ninepence," when he could fairly earn that always desirable guerdon. "Don't name it. I'm glad I was by, that's all."

"But I owe you my life—and perhaps you'll catch cold—and lose your day's work. Oh! really, if I had anything to give you."

"Give him some drawing lessons," said his friend waggishly. (Perhaps this gentleman was acquainted with Miles Cassidy's history, and his educational foible.)

"Well, you might drop your chaff at a time like this, Phil, when I've been saved from the jaws of DEATH, and haven't so much as a MAG to offer the good fellow who——"

"Howld on, sir; never mind that," said Miles. "Maybe he's talking more sense than he thinks for. And is it a drawing-tacher you are?"

"Well, I should like to be, if I could get anybody to teach. Phil here inveigled me to Oxford with promise of a good connection; but, if I've seen so much as a single BROWN—— I beg your pardon. Yes, I am a professional artist. And if you'd only allow me to paint your wife's portrait, or your mother's, or your aunt's, or anybody's, as a slight and contemptible return for the PRICELESS debt I owe you——"

"Sure I wouldn't be giving you the throuble," said Miles, amused at the young artist's emphatic manner. "We're none of us handsome enough to be put in picthurs. But if you're so mighty anxious to pay me the price of your life, I'll take it out, as your friend says."

"How do you mean?"

"Faix, in drawing lessons."

"Oh, I say, what an out-and-out good fellow you are, to turn it all off in a joke, like that! But, really, if a three-quarter or a kitcat—I'd say half-length, only upon my soul I couldn't raise for a canvas of that size, just at the present moment."

Miles explained that he had not been joking, and gravely admitted his new acquaintance to the secret of his peculiar circumstances and views. Mr. Stupple tossed up his damaged hat with delight at the prospect of being enabled to render any service to the saviour of his life, and promised to qualify Frank and Teddy for the Royal Academy.

Mr. Stupple did not quite succeed in doing this, nor did the ardour of his gratitude long maintain anything like its original white heat. It cooled gradually, and at last went out altogether. But gratitude is an expensive virtue, and poor little Mr. Stupple was really too needy to be able to keep up his payments. He gave Frank and Teddy a great many gratuitous drawing lessons, and then left off.

But as he *was* an artist (and grew in after-life to be a successful one), what he had taught them was really of a nature to be serviceable, as a foundation of technical knowledge, to any youth with a natural aptitude for drawing.

Ted profited by Mr. Stupple's instructions; Frank did not. Drawing, indeed, was the only one of the gentler arts in which Master Ted ever displayed any proficiency.

In such a manner did "Mad Cassidy" pick, forage, and "cadge" along the by-ways, hedge-rows, and gutters of society, to bring home scraps of enlightenment and refinement to his young,—just as a London sparrow will dive under coach-wheels, and grope in dingy courtyards, in search of those grains of nourishment for *her* young, which my Lady Pheasant and well-to-do Mistress Partridge find brought home in barrowsful to their nursery-doors by obsequious farmers.

Well, what then? I am happy to say I have seen some very plump, good-looking London sparrows in my time, and I rather admire the species.

CHAPTER V.

FIRST, A BRIEF APOLOGUE. THEN SOME MENTION OF A LITTLE ADDITION TO THE FAMILY.

It may not surprise the reader to learn that, having arrived at the end of the last chapter, I fell asleep.

I dreamed I was a waiter in an eating-house where a very hungry-looking gentleman had taken his seat at a table, which he kept hammering impatiently with his knife-handle, and calling "Waiter!"

"Coming, sir," I replied;—"ox-tail, mulligatawny, giblet——"

"The joint."

"Yes, sir."

In a few minutes the gentleman was hammering the table more impatiently than before. He exclaimed,

"Now then, waiter!"

"Coming, sir. Fried sole; cod's head, oyster sauce; crimped skate, very nice; stewed eels——."

"I told you I wanted the joint."

"Yes, sir."

A third time the hungry-looking gentleman hammered the table—this time furiously—and shouted,

"WAITER!"

"Coming, sir."

"*Am* I to have that joint to-day or not?"

"Yes, sir. Like a nice curry, sir? Stewed sweetbreads, very nice, sir."

"If you don't at once set that joint before me, I shall get up and leave the house."

"Directly, sir. Coming, sir."

And then I awoke.

The reader, if not too impatient for a cut at the joint, may, perhaps, amuse himself by pointing a moral to the above with his carving-knife.

We have now got as far as the year of grace 1811, and are still in Oxford.

One spring afternoon the Birmingham coach drove up to the Star. The driver—shaking a little sleeping girl who, with a large market-basket for a footstool, was jealously embracing a formidable bundle on the seat behind him—called out, "Now then, little woman, jump up! We're at Oxford."

"Oh! Is Uncle Miles in?" said the little maiden naïvely, to the intense delight of her fellow-passengers. The child returned their laughter with a merry grin, disclosing a lovely set of white teeth, and expanding a pair of round eyes like large dark beads, proving

that a perfect understanding had been established between them during their journey.

"She 's the rummest little midge *I* ever see," said the big lumbering coachman admiringly, looking at his passenger as a good-natured Newfoundland dog might regard a pretty kitten; "she have kep us a-grinning with her queer tricks and sayings all the blessed way from Brummin'am to Woodstock. There she tumbled off asleep, from sheer fatigue of the jaws, *I* think."

"But which *is* Uncle Miles's?" persisted the little maiden, fussily, when she had been lifted down to the pavement, and seen her precious luggage safely deposited by her side. She was a pretty, bright-looking child, of some ten years of age, dressed with extreme simplicity, her costume consisting of a dark serge dress, a gray-hooded cloak, and a straw bonnet. There was a broad black ribbon on the latter.

"She wants Cassidy the Irish's. Who 'll show her the way? She 'll pay any one for the trouble with that comical gab of hers."

"Send one of the porters with her; I 'll pay him," said one outside passenger, a young collegian.

"I pass Cassidy's door," said another, a tradesman of the town just returned from a business journey; "she can walk with me."

"Hubbaboo! how mighty polite we all are! Faix, and I don't know as I 'll go wid ye. Maybe

that gintleman's going to offer to take me in his gig."

This was in reference to a reserved and rather austere-looking dandy, who had occupied the box-seat for the last two stages, and had now descended from the coach and mounted a private vehicle, which a groom had brought to meet him.

"Don't be rude, my darling," said the coachman.

"Sure, it was only my fun," the child answered, her flow of spirits suddenly checked by the reproof.

"I will take her in my gig, if she likes," said the dandy, blushing up to the ears at this display of good-natured weakness. "I employ her uncle sometimes, and I shall have to pass near his workshop. I have no doubt she is fatigued."

"There! What do we say to that, missy—eh?"

The child's face had brightened up instantly. She clapped her hands, and exclaimed, in comic rapture and astonishment, "Oh, think o' that! And is it me that's to ride in the gig?"

"To be sure. And you ought to be very much obliged to the gentleman."

"Faix, and I am. Jump me up!"

"There!" said Jehu, taking her tenderly in his arms; "and remember you haven't paid the coachman."

The little girl looked frightened.

"Sure, I thought Father Foggo did that."

"Ah, but there's a kiss owing," said the driver; "and I couldn't take that from Father Foggo, you know."

The child, greatly relieved, burst into a joyous laugh, threw her arms round the coachman's neck, and kissed him heartily, saying, with the innate politeness of her people,

"And thank ye kindly, sir, for the care of me."

"And don't I deserve one, too?" asked the collegian.

"Oh, then, the cakes and the *vinum calidum*— that's right, isn't it?"—

"Quite right."

"They wasn't given for nothing, wasn't they?" said the little puss, saucily. "Take your pay, then, and be off!" And she offered her round, healthy cheek, that looked like a dusty peach in dry weather, to be kissed by the collegian, who went on his way rejoicing.

"Stop!" cried the child.

The collegian turned.

"What's apples? I've forgot."

"*Poma*," was the laughing answer.

"It's all right," and she held up her basket triumphantly; "I've got 'em safe here in the *canistrum*."

A roar of laughter from the bystanders greeted this remarkable display of erudition.

The tradesman came forward with a half-abashed snigger, saying, "As it seems to be going round, I suppose I may ask for one."

"Sure, and what have *you* done to desarve it?" said little miss. "Oh, you *did* offer to show me the way. That's something, anyhow. You may have one," and she kissed the tradesman.

Then settling herself with much fuss and exultation in the gig, which its good-natured owner had kept waiting for her while she made her *adieux*, she said, "Now, sir, I won't keep you any longer. I hope it's a good long way to my Uncle Miles's; for it's the first time I was ever in a gig in my life, and belike it 'll be the last."

The gentleman touched his blood-mare with the whip, and the vehicle darted off at a rapid pace in the direction of St. Aldate's.

"Good-by, little woman!" chorused the group of coachman, guard, and passengers assembled at the inn-door.

"Good-by to yez!"

The little girl kissed her hand repeatedly as she disappeared.

"Well, if that ain't the rummest start I ever see!" said a sleek-haired, philosophical ostler. "There's Mr. Wingrove, the stuck-up-est cove within twenty mile, a-putting 'isself hout of 'is way to drive a little Hirish beggar home through the werry streets of

Hoxford, where he took a double-first last year but one as ever was!"

"Rum little wench!" said a critical waiter, approvingly.

"Disgustingly forward!" rejoined an elderly chambermaid, with some acerbity; and then relenting,—

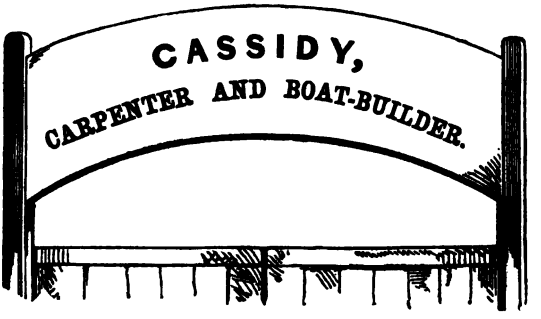
"but it is natural to people of that class; and, after all, the child is really pretty."

The coachman had stood staring after the receding vehicle, with his legs far apart. When it had disappeared, he exclaimed, with a sort of gasp,

"Blest if I don't feel as if I had lost eighteenpence and found a shilling. And I'll take that much of hot brandy-and-water, if *you* please, Miss Parker, with a shive of lemon in it."

Was this an extraordinary assemblage of good-natured people, that they one and all took such interest in the little gray-cloaked traveller? Or was it merely that the influences of childish beauty, innocence, and intelligence are irresistible by even the most churlish?

The gig drove through some of the narrow streets that lie between Pembroke College and the river, near which it stopped in front of a gateway, over which was an imposing sign-board inscribed thus:—



A boat-builder now, if you please! Nothing less. It were too much to have expected from an earthly dandy, keeping his own vehicle and man-servant, that the child's conductor should do more than set his little charge down at her uncle's door. He did this, however, right kindly, handed her her luggage with extreme politeness, patted her bonnet rather nervously, pressed a silver coin into her hand, and drove off—a blushing but humanised dandy, not half so much ashamed of himself as he had expected to feel for the transaction.

For a few brief seconds our bright-eyed, laughing little maiden felt the horrible sensation of being utterly alone in the world. I hope you have no personal recollection of that painful experience, reader. Alone in a strange town, in a strange land; standing outside a strange kinsman's door, and wondering what kind of strange reception you will meet with when it is opened to you! Such was the little traveller's position as, with a trembling hand—her eyes brimming with tears, turned wistfully in the direction of the gig that was bearing away from her the last familiar face—she rang Miles Cassidy's bell. It was answered by Miles himself, in his shirt-sleeves and paper cap.

"What is it, colleen?" he asked, rather roughly. (As I proceed with Mr. Cassidy's biography, I begin to find out his weak points. He was decidedly short-

tempered, and, when disturbed at his work, apt to be even bearish.)

The child trembled violently. But a keen look into Mr. Cassidy's face, and something re-assuring that, I suppose, she saw there, gave her the courage to say,

"If you plaze, I think you 're my Uncle Miles, for ye spake like my father, and look like him."

Miles whipped the paper cap off his head and scrubbed his forehead, his never-failing custom when in astonishment or perplexity.

"Uncle! father!—Holy Mother! who are ye, child?"

"If you plaze, I 'm little Biddy."

"Mick's child, by all that 's good! isn't it that you are?"

"Father's dead," was the sad, brief answer.

"Rest his sowl!" said the honest Irishman. "Come in, alanna, come in, and tell us what 's brought you."

And Miles led the way across the courtyard, muttering disjointed phrases, such as "Holy Mother—alone there—in the wide street—and in these hard times—my brother Mick's child—dead—rest his sowl!"—and then he shouted at the top of his voice,

"Boys, darlin's, here 's your cousin Biddy come to see ye!"

Frank and Ted, now two strapping urchins of eleven, made their appearauce, much astonished at

the announcement of a relative of whose existence they had never heard.

"Kiss the colleen, darlin's. She's your dead-and-gone Uncle Mick's child—him as I parted wid in sthrife."

The wondering but delighted boys exchanged each a trembling kiss with their pretty visitor, who said simply, "I never hard that I had cousins."

And her face beamed sweetly, and her bosom heaved, as with a new-found, unhoped-for joy.

Miles led the way into their little sitting-room, where Biddy handed him a letter, which Frank intercepted and read, as a matter of routine duty.

The letter was worded as follows:—

BROTHER MILES,

They tell me you have prospered among the enemies of our land: how far this may be true I know not. It has gone hard with me. I stuck to the old cause long after there was any of it left worth sticking to. And it is a dying man that speaks to you with Father Foggo's handwriting. There has been bad blood betune us; but you are a Christian man, and can forgive an injury. Take care of my only colleen. She is not penniless, quite. Look to her and see her brought up in the ways of piety and discration. It isn't a burden I would make of her to you, but I would like her to be near you. Maybe you can place her at sarvice, and have the eye on her from time to time. And no more at present from your dying brother,

MICHAEL CASSIDY.

Miles muttered a silent prayer, and then asked of his niece, "And how did Mick die?"

"They wouldn't tell me," said the child, her eyes filling and her chest heaving as she spoke; "but I know well he was shot."

"Woe unto them by whom offences shall come!" said Miles, solemnly; and he bowed his head for some seconds in silence.

"And who brought you to England, alanna?" he asked, changing the gloomy topic.

The girl recovered her bright looks as she answered, "Father Foggo. And if you wouldn't have me, I was to go back to him. There's two one-pound notes sewed in me stays. He's got the other eight that he'll send ye, if ye'll take me. Here's where he is, written on the bit o' paper. He came to Barmingham on purpose. He's going far, far away —to America in Brazil, to convert the haythen, he says, whatever that is. But he said, if you didn't look kind at me, or was poorer than me father thought, I was to go back to him, and he'd put me with them as would be good to me; but not so good as a kind uncle, my father's own brother. And you are a kind uncle, arn't ye?"

"The God of heaven bless that Papist ministher!" said Miles, reverently. "It's a sore burden, as times go" (Miles, with increasing prosperity, had unconsciously acquired the cautious slang of the

well-to-do), "and with the boys to do my duty by. What 'll we do with a colleen in this poor place?"

Impulsive, large-hearted Ned, who looked, for his part, as if he would like to eat her, such was his undisguised, open-mouthed admiration of the unwonted visitor, said, "She can have my half of the little bed, father! I like sleeping on the shavings, you know, almost as well as Jimmy."

Gentlemanlike, well-spoken Frank observed, with no less kindness and sincerity, at the same time with more forethought, "She can do our sewing, and get the meals ready, father!"

"Oh, that I can!" put in Biddy.

"And that will leave you more time to attend to the shop, you know, father. Fred and Tom Harris's sister is only twelve."

"Sure, I 'll be eleven in June," said Biddy, eagerly.

"And she makes all their clothes for them. Their father calls her his little housekeeper. Why shouldn't we have a little housekeeper?"

Miles rubbed his head thoughtfully, and soliloquised,

"I 've brought 'em up right so far. They are for doing as they would be done by. I musn't spoil the lesson. The poor colleen has travelled over the ground they travelled, and she 's me brother Mick's own child. It 's one more to work for; but it 's

God's will. Boys, get out the taypot, and the bread, and the butter, for the colleen. She shall stop with us, with Heaven's blessing!"

"Hooray!" cried the boys—even Frank forgetting his gentility on the joyful occasion.

It was nine o'clock at night. The child was asleep, fatigued with her journey, smiling sweetly in her slumbers on a primitive couch extemporised by the beaver-like ingenuity of honest Ned—consisting of a sack of shavings encased in a blanket, and securely arranged upon chairs—and warmly covered with her own thick cloak and the extra garments of the simple little family.

"Boys," said Miles between the whiffs of his last pipe, "I 've been thinking of a thing you may help me in."

"Is it to paint Mr. Jackson's boat, father?" asked Ted. "Call me at four."

"No, darlin'. It 's about the colleen that 's been sent among us, I am sure for a good purpose. She 'll be of great help to us."

"Crikey! won't she!" (Ned *was* vulgar, almost from his cradle.)

"We 'll make a great business of this yet some day; and she shall keep the accounts. You must tache her to read and write."

"I 'll begin to-morrow," said Frank.

"Frank's the boy for that!" Ned said, enthusiastically. "But I can teach her something, too."

"What's that, Ted?" Frank asked, with the least tinge of good-natured patronage in his manner.

"Housework, and all that. And I say, father ——"

"Well, darlin'?"

"I was just thinking, if Frank could only teach her to print?"

"Printing is done by metallic letters, brother. I have seen them doing it at the University Press. It takes at least seven years' apprenticeship to learn the business. Mr. Partickle told me so."

"Bother! I mean, if she could paint letters in printing hand. It would save us paying Mr. Robins's man for putting the names on the boats' sterns. Wouldn't it, father?"

"It would, darlin'. It's a blessing my brother Mick's child will bring upon us, I'm seeing already. And ye'll tache her the ciphering, and the Latin, and Greek, too, Masther Frank?"

Frank laughed.

"Girls never learn Latin and Greek, father."

"More's the pity. What's sauce for the gander is sauce for the goose. Latin and Greek costs money, alanna, and I'm not going to let you keep all that I'm paying for to yourself. You'll hand over all the Latin and Greek you get to Mick's child, as fast as you receive it, or we'll fall out."

"I 'll try, father, if you wish it."

"I can rule her copy-books for her," said Ned.

"That 's darlin's, both. I 'm a happy man this day, beyond my desarts. Now, boys, the Bible, and to bed."

Mr. Cassidy had become remarkably orthodox; and the Bible was a new delight to him, as he heard it read with little Frank's silvery voice, and fine, just intonation.

From that day forth the *maison Cassidy* became as a civilised household, thanks to the introduction of the female element. Little Biddy grew in wit, worth, sense, and beauty, and was idolised by all who knew her. She became as the good fairy in the old nursery tale of *Order and Disorder*. She was the very spirit of harmony. And the quaint little family grew and prospered.

CHAPTER VI.

VACATION STUDIES.

It now behoves the chronicler to take cognisance of the Honourable Cymon Pyebush and his doings.

It may not be wholly superfluous (the cheapness of Pocket Peerages notwithstanding) to inform the general reader that the Honourable Cymon was a cadet of the noble house of Raventree; being, in fact, the youngest of a numerous brood of grandchildren, hatched with the especial destiny of being maintained at the expense, or by the influence, of Falcon, fifth Earl of Raventree, of Featherstone Beakie, near Eaglescliff, Roxburghshire, and Bullyrook Castle, Galway.

In the year 1808 the Honourable Cymon Pyebush, at that time approaching his fifteenth birthday, entered the Royal Navy, and didn't like it, feeling that he had a superior vocation for the army. This predilection was not discovered until a court-martial — appointed to adjudicate upon some youthful *espièglerie* perpetrated by the Honourable Cymon, in

company with certain other "young gentlemen" of the ship he belonged to—had graciously accorded him permission to withdraw, without the ignominy of a formal expulsion from the naval service, to which he had scarcely been allowed time to become an ornament. It should be stated that the freak alluded to, though from a disciplinarian point of view quite inexcusable, left the Honourable Cymon's moral character wholly untainted.

A *Gazette*, in March, 1811, nominated the Honourable Cymon Pyebush to a cornetcy in a cavalry regiment. In this capacity our hero (*pro tem.*) served with distinction, if not with glory, for the space of five years. His regiment not having been called into active service during the period of his connection with it, the Honourable Cymon Pyebush became disgusted with the military profession. To this feeling he gave formal expression A.D. 1816; justly observing that all chances of worldly advancement in the martial calling, as far as concerned the British nation, had terminated with the great European war. It may not be wholly irrelevant to state, that the Honourable Cymon failed to hit upon this discovery until such time as an accumulation of debt and dilemma had rendered the sale of his commission a matter rather of necessity than of choice.

The Honourable Lieutenant Pyebush sold out in March, 1816, and passed some months in continental

retirement. It was now decided that there was nothing to be done with him except to put him into the Church. I will not criticise this decision, or the too common practice it represents. I will merely state, that as there was a snug living in the Raventree family, the Honourable Cymon—already proved heinously incapable of subjection to the not over-severe moral codes of the army and navy — was ordered to qualify himself for holy orders, with a view to its occupation. As a preliminary step, the Honourable Cymon entered himself as a student in the University of Cambridge, A.D. 1819.

It is remarkable, rather than astonishing, that the Honourable Cymon didn't like Cambridge. In a (for him) surprisingly well-written and truly eloquent epistle, he explained to his patron and grandfather, the Earl of Raventree, that the too exclusively mathematical system of education pursued at the University of which he had enrolled himself a member, was scarcely the basis for an ecclesiastical training, such as a man who (as he confessed of himself with great penitence) had lost so much valuable time required. He was of opinion that he would get on more rapidly at Oxford; and in that belief, acting upon the advice of some valued and experienced friends, had withdrawn his name from the books of his late college. He did not feel it necessary to explain to his noble relative that the experience of the valued

friends referred to had pointed out to him certain clauses in the University Statutes which, in the course of an hour or two—subsequent to the inevitable discovery of some fearful breach of college discipline—would have rendered such withdrawal a work of supererogation.

The Honourable Cymon arrived in Oxford rather late in the Trinity Term of 1820. His advent was not celebrated by the erection of triumphal arches, or any other marked display of enthusiasm on the part of the University authorities. Nevertheless, allowances are to be made for the eccentricities or shortcomings of a peer's grandson; and Cymon's rather inodorous Cambridge reputation proved no obstacle to his matriculation at one of the Halls in Oxford.

It was now really time that the Honourable Cymon Pyebush should commence shovelling under ground, by some summary process, the enormous crop of wild oats he had accumulated. The patience of Lord Raventree, his noble grandfather, upon whom he was entirely dependent, was now thoroughly exhausted. The Cambridge *fiasco* had proved the last straw on the camel's back. Cymon was informed that if he missed a single further step in his progress towards holy orders, the family living would be at once given to some deserving person, and all future supplies stopped.

To say that Cymon himself was anxious to "pull up," or reform, at this time, would be to record nothing new. He was the least callous and most penitent of sinners. He had been ashamed of himself ever since he could remember. His sins punished him fearfully, and he was constantly trying to get rid of them. But somehow they wouldn't go; or, if they did for a time, invariably came back again, like the bad penny in the adage.

But things had come to a crisis. Cymon knew his grandfather to be a man of stern resolution, especially when resolved upon doing anything disagreeable. What his lordship had threatened there was no doubt he would put into execution, if provoked. Cymon was a very damaged six-and-twenty, with most expensive tastes, which, in the event of the family living slipping through his fingers, he saw no prospect of gratifying. The living, to be sure, would answer his purpose exactly, if he could only get it. There was no mistake about the value of the golden apples. The difficulty was to overcome the terrible dragon at the garden-gate with the originally slender, and now almost hopelessly blunted, weapons at poor Cymon's disposal. However, there was no alternative but to make a fight for it. Cymon prepared himself to face the terrors of reading and examination with grim resolution.

The lateness of his matriculation gave him a fair

excuse for postponing active service until the following term. This gave him the clear long vacation to read in, which he honestly determined to make the best possible use of. Fortunately Cymon, among his new college chums, had discovered a real friend—one who did not merely hunt him for the sake of his tuft, and who was able and willing to serve him at this turning crisis of his fortunes. This was an old schoolfellow of Cymon's, one Harcourt Steadman, M.A., a gentleman of considerable talents and immense learning, who, having won numerous scholarships and prizes, had recently concluded his master's term, and was leisurely preparing himself for higher honours. He took pity on Cymon's forlorn condition, and good-naturedly agreed to forego the pleasures of grouse-shooting, or of continental travel, for the disinterested task of officiating as amateur "coach" to his friend. This matchless trait of devotion, I trust, will suffice to paint the character of Mr. Steadman as that of a very good fellow indeed.

The first movement of the Coach was to wheel his cumbersome passenger out of Oxford on the first day of vacation—away from the fascinations of Mother Jeffcoate's, of Larry Wyatt's Shoulder of Mutton, of Wheatley bull-baits and Port-Meadow matches; of Morell, his beer, and of Milky William, his badgers. The two friends, with a view to quietude and seclusion, took lodgings in the quaint little town of

A——, a few miles from Oxford. There, the Coach began running in earnest.

But Cymon was a terrible load for the broadest wheels and the stoutest springs! Steadman, though he set to work with the heartiest will imaginable, could scarcely move him. Cymon's inability to study was something incredible. His tardy but well-meant eagerness to recover his lost ground was painfully ludicrous. Of course, he started at a spanking pace, as is customary in such cases; and, equally of course, got speedily out of breath, and came to a stand-still. After sporting the oak (or the rural substitute for it, at their inn-lodgings at A——) for three whole days, and almost choking himself with Greek roots which he—unlearned pig as he was!—found it impossible to digest, Cymon was obliged to confess himself dead beat.

"It's no go, Steddy," he said to his friend, despairingly; "I can't keep it up at the pace."

"I never supposed you could. But I thought it best to give you your head at first. What would you like to be up to?"

"I don't care, so as it's violent, and in the open air. If I don't go out and row, or shoot, or gallop, or something, I shall have to work off my steam by giving you a thundering hiding. And that would hurt my feelings, you know—awful!"

"Well, I don't think I should like it much

either," said little Mr. Steadman, with a quiet smile. "We'll go on the river."

"Oh! ought I though, Steddy?" the overgrown schoolboy inquired, with a delighted expansion of the eyes.

"Of course you ought. If you hadn't proposed it yourself I should have insisted upon it. The springs want oiling. Throw the books away, and go and tittivate."

"Oh, Steddy, what a brick you are!"

The Honourable Cymon Pyebush hurled his Xenophon viciously into a corner of the sitting-room, and, after it, the square cap, which, in defiance of all extra-collegiate etiquette, he would persist in wearing (in the seclusion of his study only) out of Oxford, with a view, as he said, to inspiration, and danced upstairs to his toilette, humming a lively measure.

Except that our honourable but inerudite friend was in his twenty-sixth year, six feet two inches high, corpulent and whiskered withal, beyond the ordinary luck of mortals, there was no material difference at this juncture between Mr. Pyebush and a "kept-in" day-scholar released from his spelling-book, and permitted to go to his marbles.

The Honourable Cymon was not long in dressing. He speedily came down, attired for the promenade, in a dazzling make-up of the period.

Would you like to see him? Here he is, as he

burst on the admiring gaze of his friend, Mr. Steadman.

Of course, no Oxford man of anything like birth and breeding would think of making such a Guy of himself in these advanced days of University reform. In fact, they have done away with all such absurdities. I have reason to know it; for, not many days ago, I made a careful sketch of an undergraduate, who was kind enough to stand in a contemplative attitude, right opposite a window in High Street where I happened to be sitting, for several minutes in succession,

apparently for my express accommodation. It is true that the "Long" was only just over, and that the gentleman—probably fresh from the Continent—might not yet have been to pay his respects to the Proctor. But the following is a faithful presentment of his aspect. Compare the two pictures; marvel at the giant strides of progress and improvement, and if you will tell me where they are likely to stop, I shall feel obliged to you.

The two friends strolled out arm-in-arm. A—— is an old-fashioned market-town, with curly streets, flanked by gabled houses of red, white, and yellow, so dazzlingly bright that they make you wink when the sun is shining upon them, and which cast purple, blue, and yellow reflections upon the grass-mottled

pavement lying in shadow below them; where there are narrow, winding, French-looking alleys, with charming gutters in the middle, such as we artists and you medical men delight to meet with in the pursuit of our callings; where you can catch fish ten pounds' weight, out of limpid water, almost within a hop, step, and jump of the town-hall—which edifice stands upon pillars, and acts as a perennial umbrella to the market-women, as a matter of course; where there is a low, rambling old church, overrun with comic sculptures, which seems to have grown on the cactus principle, aisle after aisle having been added to the original nave, to meet the increasing wants of the community, till it has become a perfect street of gabled architecture; where, to this day, you have to get your cigars at the chemist's; where the street-dogs (the really independent portion of the population) positively offend you by their insolent assertion of leisure, sunshine, and security, and make you long to give them a brisk half-hour at the London Bridge crossing, to teach them what life really means; where the huge brass plate of the County Bank, in which no business whatever appears to be done, is perennially dusty, from proximity to the Corn Exchange next door; where every little peddling inn has its *porte-cochère*, like a baronial mansion of old; where the peace keeps itself in admirable preservation with the nominal assistance of an asthmatic constable, and

a pair of stocks; where there is a gate-house that is a picture, a town-mill that might be—perhaps has been—a monastery, and a long insect of a bridge, crawling over two or three river islands, that is a panorama of loveliness; where all, in fact, is picturesque, placid, and beautiful—to everybody except the inhabitants, who consider it the dullest and ugliest hole in the world, and dream of Cheapside as of Paradise.

As A—— was eight-and-thirty years ago, so is it now. Progress has passed it by. There is a little shed, it is true, a few hundred yards out of the town, dignified by the title of "Railway Station," which is, in fact, the terminus of a single line of rails communicating with one of the great iron roads, for the convenience of the citizens of A—— and their unfrequent visitors; but this is the worst thing of the kind that has yet happened to the place. I doubt if they have even a Literary and Scientific Institution, and am inclined to think, hopefully, that the givers of "Entertainments" have not yet found them out. So that A—— is still a town to be envied, in many respects. The only real danger by which it appears to be menaced is from the photographers, a large army of whom, on the occasion of my last visit, had invested the territory, and were evidently bent on reducing its crumbling beauties to utter subjection.

"Can we get a boat in this place?" inquired the Honourable Cymon Pyebush.

"Certainly; I am going to introduce you to some old friends of mine, who will lend us a very good one."

"Come, I say, Steddy, none of that."

"What?"

"I don't want to be introduced to any of the families about here. There 's a place—Brayle Castle or something—not far off, that I 've got letters to. Our people know them. But I don't mean to call. Visiting would play the deuce with my reading."

"Why so—in moderation?"

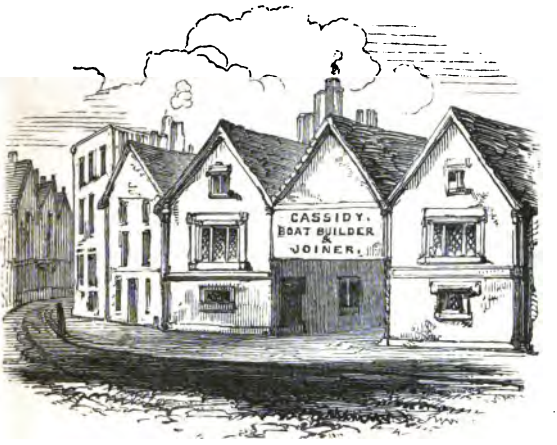
"What a chap you are! As if *I* could ever do anything in moderation! Suppose there was to be any nice girls there; I 'm such a susceptible chap, you know——"

"Then you must try and master your susceptibilities, for I am just going to introduce you to one of the sweetest and most accomplished girls in the world."

Mr. Pyebush made a flurried inspection of his toilette, which was decidedly of the turf, turfy.

"Oh, don't, Steddy, in this trim! A morning call, you know. Let 's go back and put on a correct sort of coat."

"Don't trouble yourself. My friends are not ceremonious people. Here we are at the family mansion."



"Oh, I see," said Cymon, with a smile of mingled relief and disappointment, as his friend preceded him into the courtyard of an edifice somewhat resembling what the artist has above attempted to depict.

"What do you see?" inquired Mr. Steadman.

"I was sold, that's all. I thought you were going to introduce me to some people of good family."

"So I am—one of the best families in the world."

"No doubt; but you said friends of yours——"

"I am not a little proud to be admitted to the friendship of this family," said little Mr. Steadman, with unusual warmth, for he was by no means a demonstrative man. "You will find them very extraordinary people, I can tell you."

"By Jove, you're right, if *that's* one of them!"

the Honourable Cymon Pyebush exclaimed, with a start of unmistakable alarm.

Before we ascertain who "*that*" was, it is indispensable that we should arrive at a thorough understanding as to the nature, extent, and bearings of our friend Cassidy's new premises (his motives for leaving Oxford will be speedily apparent). Messrs. Pyebush and Steadman found themselves in a spacious quadrangle, measuring some fifty feet long by thirty wide, well stocked with rough materials of the joiner's craft, in its miscellaneous branches. It was enclosed on all sides by buildings. The street-frontage is explained by the sketch. On the left, as you entered, was a neat dwelling-house, extending to the whole length of the courtyard, vine-covered, well-to-do-looking, with abundant flower-pots in front of, and cozy red or dazzling white curtains behind, the bright transparent window-panes. This was entered by a low doorway, with a trellised porch, covered with the clustering bines of the blue convolvulus. Facing the dwelling was a long shed, where a few invalid carts and trucks, with a superannuated boat, were laid up in ordinary. Above the shed was a long, shallow workshop, glazed all over with lozenged windows, whence proceeded deafening and incessant sounds of hammer, saw, and chisel. On this side (the right as you entered—I am obliged to be particular, though it force me to be inelegant, and even tedious), and close to the gateway,

projected a little parasite wooden edifice, inscribed "Counting House." At the other extremity, a portion of the shed was divided off as a stable. The courtyard was closed in at the end by a spacious boat-house, which, through a frame of mellow shadow, disclosed a delicious view of the liquid silver Thames, and miles of sunny, elm-spotted meadows beyond it.

And now let us explain "*that.*"

"*That*" was no other than our old friend, Soft Jimmy (aged thirty-two at this period of our history), who glared at the Honourable Cymon through the counting-house window, from under a tastefully arranged wig of shavings, which, with great presence of mind, he removed immediately on discovering that one of the visitors was not an *habitué* of the establishment, disclosing his own cropped hair and deplorably misshapen skull.

Jimmy was not a good-looking man, even for an idiot. He had no control over the muscles of his mouth, which was large and flabby. His eyes, too, were wholly independent one of the other, and only by rare accidents could be induced to pull together. On the present occasion, in addition to his usual working suit, he was attired in a patched frieze coat, which he wore tied round his neck by the sleeves—in what he, doubtless, considered an imposing bow, but which did not really enhance the limited charms of his personal appearance.

No wonder the Honourable Cymon Pyebush was a little startled by such an apparition.

Mr. Steadman knew Jimmy of old. He approached the window and shouted,

"Master in, Jimmy?"

Jimmy grinned through the window, and made no answer.

"Edward?"

Jimmy grinned still more broadly, but remained immovable.

"Miss Cassidy, then?"

Intense enjoyment was the only expression perceptible on Jimmy's face through the little bull's-eyed panes of the counting-house window.

"Open the door," said Steadman, rattling at the counting-house latch. It was bolted inside.

Jimmy showed no signs of capitulation or surrender. Steadman looked at him again through the window, and saw him wagging his head triumphantly, as who should say, "Not if I know it."

"By Jove!" exclaimed the Honourable Cymon Pyebush, expressing a long-drawn breath.

"A poor natural!" Mr. Steadman explained. "They use him as a house-dog—and a lucky dog, too, to be in such good quarters. I see how it is. He's been ordered to let no one into the counting-house, and answer no questions. We'll try the house."

Mr. Steadman walked over to the dwelling-house, and proceeded to try the latch of that edifice. Almost instantaneously, Soft Jimmy flew out of the counting-house, locked the door behind him, pocketed the key with surprising rapidity, crossed the yard in three strides, and placed himself, panting and truculent, between Mr. Steadman and the portal of the private house; his back against the door, his arms and legs spread out rigidly before it, and his wild eyes glaring ugly defiance to the intruders.

The Honourable Cymon Pyebush, who was as brave a fellow as ever lived, in a simple pugnacious way, and who would cheerfully have faced any quantity of French cannon, if that inactive cavalry regiment of his had only given him the chance, was thoroughly frightened.

Not so Mr. Harcourt Steadman, M.A., who was undersized and physically delicate—all his muscular system having flown to his brains. He confronted the poor, witless savage with the most perfect calm, fixing the erratic eyes of that personage unsparingly with his own keen ones.

"Now, this won't do, Jimmy, you know. You have no right to treat *me* in this way."

Jimmy's chest heaved, and his eyeballs rolled in all manner of directions. But he placed his back still more firmly against the door, and clutched the doorposts with increased desperation.

"Oh, I think I understand you now, Jimmy. You were told not to let anybody into the house or the counting-house?"

Jimmy gave a delighted nod.

"And you were not to speak to anybody?"

Jimmy nodded several times. Tears of gratitude sprang into his eyes for this kind comprehension of his difficult mission.

"Then you are a good boy, Jimmy, and I am sorry I spoke harshly to you. But we may go into the workshop—may we not?"

Jimmy looked radiant, and nodded. Here was a means of "hedging" out of his difficulty he had evidently not foreseen.

"Or into the boat-house?"

Another nod. The workshop and boat-house had certainly not been named in Jimmy's plan of defence.

"Come along, Pyebush, we shall find somebody," said Steadman.

Mr. Pyebush, not quite easy in his mind, followed his friend towards the boat-house at the end of the courtyard. This edifice, it should be stated, was enclosed on the side nearest the town by a glazed partition, but was open on that towards the river, for the convenience of launching boats. Mr. Steadman opened the door, and disclosed what the susceptible Mr. Pyebush believed to be the loveliest picture he had ever seen in his lifetime.

I have thought it rather a pretty one myself, and have ventured to draw it to the best of my amateur abilities. How immeasurably short I have fallen of

the charming reality I do not require to be told. I *shall* be told, though, I have no doubt; and I dare-say it will serve me right, for my temerity in attempting such a subject. I shall like it none the better on that account. I never found a whipping come any the lighter for the consciousness I had earned it through being naughty.

The subject would, perhaps, not strike the reader as an exalted one from bare definition. It was merely our old friend Biddy, on her knees, with a pot of black paint by her side, inscribing the unclassic name of "Jemima" in bold Roman characters on the stern of a new boat. But the fairest things have not always the most dignified titles—Biddy herself, for instance, who was one of the fairest of God's creatures. If you could conceive Biddy—as I cannot draw or describe her—at the age of twenty-one; her masses of golden hair; her brown eyes, that appeared black by contrast with that hair, and her healthy, transparent skin; her long, graceful neck; her smooth, rounded forehead, that was only too large to be purely classical; her perfect shoulders, and long, rosy fingers, tapering to a pointed cluster over the camel's-hair brush with which she was pursuing her ignoble occupation; if your imagination could realise this charming figure sitting in the shadow of the boat-house, and lighted by the reflection of a dazzling background of sunny landscape,

I think you would excuse both the Honourable Cymon Pyebush and the artist, for feeling, the latter incompetent and the former spooney.

Let us, however, confine ourselves to facts. It was all up with Pyebush. There can be no mistake whatever about *that*.

The noise from the adjoining workshop was so great that the entrance of our two friends was unnoticed by the fair painter, who continued her occupation. Steadman motioned his companion to advance silently. There was no occasion for this precaution. The Honourable Cymon Pyebush was perfectly agape, motionless, inarticulate, with astonishment and admiration.

"By Jove!" he exclaimed mentally, "here's a rum place! Raving lunatics for hall porters, and heavenly angels for journeymen painters! *By* Jove!"

Biddy went on with her work, blissfully unconscious of supervision, humming softly an Irish tune as she plied her homely pencil.

The world went round with Pyebush!

Biddy's rest-stick suddenly twisted round, and her hand fell forward, blotting the letter "M," which she had skilfully completed, into a huge black dab.

"Bad 'cess to you!" exclaimed Biddy, anathematising the treacherous support; and then, recovering her philosophy with her equilibrium, she added, as she prepared to remedy the evil, "παθήματα μαθήματα!"

"Αἰεν ἀριστεύειν καὶ ὑπείροχον ἔμμεναι ἄλλων," said Mr. Steadman, adroitly capping the proverb.

Biddy got up as quick as lightning, and responded with, "Νὺν δὲ μ' ἐων ὀλιγος τε καὶ οὐτιδανος καὶ ἀειδης."

"Greek!" exclaimed the Honourable Cymon Pyebush to himself. "By Jove! what next?"

The next was that Miss Biddy Cassidy, seeing that her old acquaintance had introduced a stranger to the mysteries of her *atelier*, laid aside her humble employment, and comported herself like a perfectly well-bred and self-possessed young lady. She went through the ceremony of introduction to the Honourable Cymon Pyebush without the slightest bashfulness or disconcertment. More than could be said of Cymon!

"And how is the classic Muse?" inquired Mr. Steadman, when formalities had been interchanged.

"Turned into the Muse of painting, if there is such a person," said Biddy, laughing, as she prepared to accompany her visitors into the courtyard, not forgetting first to wash her paint-brush in a pot of turpentine, in the most business-like manner imaginable.

When Biddy came out into the sunlight, and the Honourable Cymon Pyebush found that she stood that trying ordeal without depreciation—that she was tall, well formed, and elegant in all her movements—the state of our patrician friend became simply hope-

less; and he could do nothing for the rest of the interview but suck the handle of his horsewhip, and stare.

Biddy took a key from her pocket and opened the door of the private house (with a nod of approval to Jimmy, faithful to his post at the counting-house window, as she did so), ushering her guests into a comfortable but somewhat oddly-furnished sitting-room. Rough drawings and oil-paintings—chiefly of dogs and horses—covered the walls. In a niche of the apartment stood a table loaded with well-thumbed books of a scholastic aspect. Above these hung a scholar's gown and square cap.

"Have you had lunch?" inquired the fair housekeeper, when her visitors were seated.

"No; but we 've just breakfasted, and don't want any."

"Then you 'll have some wine," Miss Biddy remarked, producing decanters of port and sherry from a cupboard.

"Now, we don't want it, Miss Biddy; and you know perfectly well we shall be much better without it."

"And *you* know perfectly well what Miles Cassidy would say if I let a friend of *his*"—Miss Biddy's voice lowered as she indicated the cap and gown hanging against the wall by an inclination of her beautiful head—"go away without a crust or a sup of welcome. Will I give you port or sherry?"

"Port," said Mr. Steadman.

"Sherry," said Mr. Pyebush, startled into confusion at the sound of his own voice, and wondering what he had said.

"No news, I suppose?" Steadman inquired, nodding towards the cap and gown.

Biddy shook her head, sadly.

"Your uncle is a strange mixture," said Mr. Steadman, sipping his port. Pyebush had spilt his sherry over his buckskins, on its being handed to him by Biddy, and had altogether made the ceremony of wine-taking a deplorable failure.

"Strange, indeed!" said the young girl, musingly; adding, with a smile at the conceit suggested by her reflections, "as strange as a bushel of guineas, half guineas, and seven-shilling pieces mixed up together. But it's all gold, Mr. Steadman."

"I am afraid there is a little iron in the composition, Miss Biddy. I respect Cassidy as much as anybody; but he is certainly a hard man."

"Prove that, Mr. Steadman," said Biddy, with flashing eyes.

"In the first place, pardon me for saying so, he has no right, with his means, to put you to unfeminine occupations."

"He never does. Is there anything unfeminine in painting letters on a boat when I am able to do it? Or do you suppose that I do it on compulsion?

I do that to humour his fancy, that we should all work together. It was the first thing I learnt to be of use in. He delights to see me do it, and would give me golden brushes and ivory palettes to paint with, if I wanted them. If I was made a queen to-morrow, I'd have boats made on purpose to paint the names on them for him myself—in letters of gold—gold—gold!"

Miss Cassidy was a very passionate and enthusiastic young person. Her manifesting those qualities was no alleviation to the Honourable Cymon Pyebush's sudden attack. On the contrary.

"I am the last person to wish to do an injustice," said Mr. Steadman, contritely. "Remember that Frank was my friend; and let that excuse me, if I am prejudiced."

"You are one of those, then, who think Miles Cassidy a hunks, a curmudgeon, a tyrant, an unnatural father! Oh, if they knew him as I do!"

Miss Cassidy, as she said this, spoiled her beauty terribly. Her features were painfully distorted, and she pulled her golden hair about with her taper fingers out of all propriety.

But it was no relief to Pyebush, who vaguely wanted to thrash somebody (Steadman was too little) for having inflicted pain upon this incomprehensible boat-painting, Greek-quoting divinity.

"You think Frank to blame, then?" Steadman asked.

"Have I ever said so? No! They are both good. It is a misfortune—a fatality. *Ἀνάγκῃ οὐδὲ θεοὶ μάχονται.*"

"Greek again!" observed Mr. Pyebush to himself, with the unpleasant sensation of a man who feels his intellects departing from him.

"I blame neither," Biddy continued. "Both acted for the best. My uncle was right in wishing Frank to leave college."

"There I cannot agree with you. The very highest honours were within his reach. In a short time he might have been a fellow of his own college."

"Frank would never have taken a fellowship."

"Why not?

"Because fellows may not marry, and Frank is in love."

So was Pyebush, rather! The emotions of that bewildered patrician, on hearing this speech, were of a mixed order, composed chiefly of jealous hatred for the unknown Frank, and self-gratulation that he, Pyebush, was, at any rate, not a fellow.

Steadman smiled significantly. Biddy understood his meaning.

"You are mistaken," she said, shaking her head. "Frank does not care for me, or he would never have left us. I have many reasons for knowing that he is

in love; but with whom I have never inquired. I imagine it to be with a lady of a rank superior to his own. If so, there is an additional excuse for his being ashamed of us."

"There is no excuse for being ashamed of such a father, and, I may add, such a sister as Frank has been blessed with."

"How dare you say that, Harcourt Steadman?" Miss Biddy asked, with impetuous disregard of the conventionalities. "If you were as much Frank's friend as you call yourself, you would be better able to sympathise with him. Suppose you had the best, the most devoted and unselfish father in the world—Frank's father, in fact—could you have borne to meet him when walking in your cap and gown with your fine college friends, and he in his shirt-sleeves, carrying burdens, drawing trucks, perhaps asking you to lend him a hand, offended if you refused or avoided him? We are human beings, not angels. ('Aren't we!' thought Pyebush.) My uncle, with all his wisdom and forethought, could never be made to understand that a gentleman's pride was the necessary consequence of a gentleman's education. Besides, you Oxford gentlemen are so exceedingly delicate in your *badinage* ('French, too!' observed Cymon), and have so supreme a contempt for the advantages of birth and position, that the life of a sensitive man of humble or ridiculous origin amongst you — especially if he

happens to be talented and successful—is positively enviable." Miss Cassidy concluded her speech in tones of withering sarcasm.

"Frank's position was certainly a trying one. But your uncle did his best to alleviate it. He removed his business from Oxford solely on Frank's account."

"He did; and for that sacrifice he exacted a payment which my poor Frank could not make. He insisted that Frank should join him in the management of the business. From his view, he was quite right. Edward cannot be relied upon—more shame for him—admirable workman and clear-headed man as he can be when he likes! Frank, on the contrary, is perfectly reliable and steady; he has been thoroughly grounded in a knowledge of the trade; and with his mathematical skill and judgment, if he could have buckled to the business for a few years, then he might have been in a position to pursue his own tastes at leisure, while yet a young man. But his repugnance was too great. My uncle was annoyed. You know the result."

"I fear it was a mistake on Cassidy's part to give his children so ambitious an education."

"Oh, no, no! But for that, would he, would they, would any of us, be what we are? It will all come right, I trust. We cannot foresee all things."

"Has Frank never written?"

"No; and he will not. I know his plan, as well as if he had told it to me. He wishes to avoid us, till he can make a name and position that will enable him to laugh at the world. Then he will recognise and honour us. Till then, he is better away from us."

"No man should be ashamed of his origin," said Mr. Steadman, rather sententiously.

"A very pretty round-hand copy!" said Biddy, in scornful tones. "And how prettily the world endorses it! Be a clever poet, Mr. Steadman, or a rising statesman, and let somebody discover that your father was a journeyman tailor. Faix, and it 'ud throw your janius back a few years, I'm thinking."

Miss Biddy Cassidy, when excited, spoke Irish. When reflective and philosophical, she spoke Greek. She was not usually at home in plain English.

"Have you no clue to his whereabouts?"

"Only from his book."

"What book? I did not know he had published anything."

Biddy punished this admission of ignorance with a somewhat indignant glance, as she laid a thin quarto volume before her visitor. (Those lucky poets of forty years ago! They could get their works published in quarto, with such type and margins as we scribblers of the lower empire may not even dream of!)

Mr. Steadman opened the cover, and read a title-page worded as follows:—"ANNE BOLEYN, AND OTHER POEMS, BY FRANK GERALD, B.A., of St. Ogive's College, Oxford."

"Did he send you this?" Steadman inquired, turning over the leaves.

"No; we saw it advertised, and bought it."

"How did you know it was his, as he writes under an assumed name?"

"It is not assumed. They were both christened Gerald. Frank Gerald, and Edward Gerald. It was my aunt's name. He has only dropped the Cassidy."

"In that case, there will be no difficulty in finding him. He must be in London."

"I'm afraid they'll only find him too easily. It would have been much better to let the poor boy alone. He will do nothing to dishonour us."

"They? Whom do you allude to?"

"My uncle and Edward started for London, directly we got the book, two days ago."

"There they will, doubtless, find him, and all will be settled amicably."

"No hope of that. My uncle is implacable. He says he sees his way to making a rapid fortune here, with Frank's assistance. Frank will not consent. There will be new strife and quarrelling. I tried my best to dissuade him from going; but go he would. Then I made Ted go with him as a peace-maker.

Ted can make the peace as well as break it, and he 's mighty clever at both."

"The governor's absence, I suppose, accounts for our mysterious reception by Jimmy—eh, Pyebush?"

The Honourable Mr. Pyebush shuddered. What with lunatic doorkeepers, angelic Greek-quoting boat-painters, and poetical bachelors of arts, who, it appeared, were very wrong in not liking to be carpenters, Cymon's wits had become so utterly bemuddled in the attempt to understand this inexplicable family, that our honourable friend was positively obliged to—go on sucking his horsewhip.

"Jimmy! the creature! what has he been doing?"

Steadman briefly explained the circumstances of their reception.

Miss Cassidy bounced out into the courtyard and summoned Jimmy, who came shambling from the counting-house, hastily concealing his wig of shavings, in which he had been again secretly enjoying himself.

"Now, Jimmy, what did I tell you?" said Miss Cassidy, severely.

"Not let anybody in—'ouse—countin'-'ouse—not talk to anybody." Jimmy summed up the heads of his instructions with marvellous accuracy, though in the most indifferent articulation.

"But a man of your age, and a clever carpenter, ought to have understood that I meant strangers."

Jimmy looked sulky, as if it were too bad to expect him to understand anything—that kind of duty not coming within his legitimate department!

"You must have known that I couldn't mean you to lock out Mr. Steadman."

Jimmy didn't appear to see it.

"Now, mind, if you don't take more pains to understand what I mean, I shall be obliged to take your master's coat away from you."

Jimmy looked terrified, and retreated crab-wise to his post in the counting-house, clinging with each hand to a skirt of the threatened garment.

"It was a fortunate discovery, that coat," said Biddy, in explanation. "It is the only check I have upon him. The first day my Uncle Miles was away he was like a dog without his master. Never was anything so sulky, so stupid, and unmanageable. He would do nothing I told him, till I found he had a fancy for slipping on my uncle's old coat, and wearing it as my uncle does, with the sleeves tied round the neck—like a dog again—taking pleasure to sleep on his master's bed. So I let him wear it as a treat, and threaten to take it away from him when he misbehaves himself."

"Are you not frightened of being left alone with such an irresponsible Titan, Miss Cassidy?"

"Not a bit," said Biddy. "He likes me, next to my Uncle Miles; a little, I think, on my own account.

('A little!' thought Pyebush; 'oh, *what* an idiot!') But he obeys me because he knows I am my uncle's pet, and he is afraid of his master so much as frowning at him. Though, if my uncle was to tell him to cut my throat and drop me quietly over the wharf, Jimmy is the boy to do it."

The conversation shifted through a variety of subjects, till it rested upon that of the boat which Messrs. Steadman and Pyebush had come to hire. Biddy, with the eye of a judge, selected a neat pair-oar, which Jimmy was summoned from his lair to launch. Jimmy did this with the force and swiftness of a battering-ram, and really appeared to lose some of his idiotic expression in the conscious exercise of his solitary gift.

Biddy stood on the edge of the wharf, as it was called—a dazzling vision in the sunlight against the black boat-house—waving adieux to the rowers. As long as she was in sight, the Honourable Cymon Pyebush pulled like Briareus, puffing and snorting like Leviathan. No word spoke he until sunset—or, to dismiss metaphor, till Biddy had gone back to her painting, and was seen no more on the wharf. Then the Honourable Cymon rested on his oars, and said spasmodically,

"By Jove!"

"What's the matter, Pye?" Mr. Steadman inquired, glad of a rest for his short arms already.

"That was real Greek, wasn't it?"

"Unquestionably; Miss Cassidy is one of the best Greek scholars in or near Oxford."

"By Jove!"

Cymon pulled again for a few minutes without a word, allowing his friend to remain inactive. Then he asked,

"Where did she get it?"

"Originally through being brought up with her cousins, who have been well educated. But she has a surprising gift for languages, and is, in my opinion, a young lady of extraordinary genius altogether."

"By Jove!" said Cymon again. And he pulled his friend for another half a mile up the river without speaking.

Then he reposed on his oars once more, and broke silence with,

"Steddy, I've an idea."

"Gammon!" said Mr. Steadman, playfully.

"I have, though. It has occurred to me that I shall never be able to learn *your* Greek."

"What do you mean by my Greek?"

"Well, Greek as you teach it. It's the right sort, of course. But somehow your words don't seem to sink in or make any impression on me. Now, I seem to remember every syllable that young lady spoke, in her exact tones and pronunciation. I wonder if she'd give me some lessons?"

"Decidedly not."

Mr. Pyebush pulled another fifty yards, and inquired,

"Why?"

"In the first place, Miss Cassidy is not a professional teacher. In the second, if she were, her giving private lessons to a man of your standing and reputation might have an injurious effect."

"So help me Heaven, I never injured an innocent girl in my life!" exclaimed Pyebush, passionately, and, let it be added, truthfully. Poor Cymon's irregularities had all been prepared for him. He had never courted vice. Vice had courted him in her gayest attire, and Cymon was only too easily won.

"I know it would be taking a great liberty," he continued. "As to her being a young lady—she's simply a young angel, that is the size of it. And I think if it was explained to her what a poor devil I am—what a mess I shall be in if I get plucked—and how I believe she could help me out of it—I'm sure she wouldn't mind giving me a lift. As for the proper part of the business, I'd pay for any amount of grandmothers, aunts, or mothers to sit with us, if she would only consent. Oh, Steddy, persuade her if you can! Tell her what there is at stake—how utterly ruined I shall be if I don't get the living. The governor means it, this time. I *can't* learn from you, brick as you are. You've been the pace,

you know, with all your steadiness, and I get talking about terriers and the fancy with you: you can't frighten me as you ought to; I never could obey a *man*, that is the fact. But a woman can make me do anything—if she is a good one. It is a matter of charity. Beg, entreat her to take your place, and coach me."

It was an odd proposition. But the fortunes of the Cassidy family seemed destined to run in unconventional grooves. To Mr. Steadman, who knew his friend's constitution, it appeared perfectly reasonable. The only question was with regard to its feasibility.

"We must wait till her uncle comes home," he said. "I will put it to him if you like."

The Honourable Cymon Pyebush pulled against the stream with Herculean vigour, ejaculating "By Jove!" at intervals.

CHAPTER VII.

A ROYAL PROGRESS.

We will now, if you please, reader, imitate the adventurous kitten of the nursery rhyme, and

"Go up to London, and look at the Queen."

The Queen was, perhaps, not particularly worth looking at. She was short, puffy, middle-aged, and the reverse of intellectual. But she was very finely dressed, in a dove-coloured pelisse, and hat of the same colour, surmounted by a towering plume of white feathers, almost as big as herself. Her Majesty had also a bran-new open carriage, of novel construction, drawn by four beautiful bays, which was in itself a sight. But, whatever there was to see in the royal person and equipage of Caroline of Brunswick, Queen of England, recently arrived in this country to look after her new crown, many thousand citizens, on the morning of Thursday, the 6th of August, 1820, had turned out to see it.

The streets were densely thronged. The occasion

was that of the Queen's removal from the capital to Brandenburgh House. The reign of "the first gentleman in Europe" had set in somewhat unpropitiously, and the first-gentlemanlike reputation of the monarch was slightly at a discount. There had been some public slicing off of heads of certain misguided conspirators, who might as well have been quietly hanged, which was considered rather out of taste by an advancing community. Some much more harmless persons in the north had also been a good deal cut up by the sabres of Yeomanry Cavalry, for the crime of assembling, without arms, to deliberate on the possibility of obtaining a greater amount of food, wages, and parliamentary representation than they had been in the habit of enjoying; and the punishment of their leaders by fine and imprisonment, for the offence of standing to be cut down like poppies (or, in some cases, for only running away from that kind of operation), was approved and stoutly defended by his Majesty's ministers. To crown all, his Majesty was trying to get rid of a wife whom he was asserted to have grossly ill-treated and neglected, and whom the majority of the nation believed to be an innocent person. Failing in attempts to bribe her to forego her claims, "the first gentleman," or some second gentlemen, his advisers, for him, were endeavouring to break the poor woman's heart, by such petty persecutions as the

confiscation of her plate, the omission of her name from the Liturgy, the refusal of a suitable residence, and so forth. Finally, they were getting up the famous Bill of Pains and Penalties, which had for its basis the last motive that a generous (if not always rational) British public can tolerate, namely, avarice. Caroline of Brunswick may have been a person of objectionable conduct; but with that question the present historian has nothing whatever to do. The generous Britons aforesaid merely saw in the case an attempt on the part of a husband to get rid of the responsibility of supporting a wife whom he had notoriously married for the sake of paying his debts, and against whom, at all events, no offence had been proved. This was not thought gentlemanlike. *Ergo*, Gentleman George was unpopular, and Lady Caroline, as the opposing principle, popular.

It is difficult for "us youth," in these days of parliamentary amenities, when the boundaries of party are almost effaced, to conceive the exaggerated rancour of political hostility forty years ago. It was not then the fashion to attempt the annihilation of an adversary's principles by argument so much as to discover flaws in the reputation of his mother, or to prove his father a rogue. The well-known advice of the country surgeon to his successor on the subject of professional rivalry, "If a man sets up against you, don't find fault with his practice, but hint that

he once stole a clock," was pretty generally acted upon. Public and private questions were inextricably mixed up together. George the Fourth and his ministry being in ill odour, Queen Caroline, the assumed object of their persecutions, was exalted into a sainted martyr; and the question of her regal and conjugal rights was oddly identified with Extension of the Suffrage, Catholic Emancipation, and other popular claims; of all knowledge of which, if of nothing else, the poor lady may, at least, be asserted to have been innocent.

Be all this as it may, crowds of people lined the thoroughfares from Portman Square to Hammersmith on the August morning in question, prepared to shout themselves hoarse in approval and encouragement of her Majesty on her way from the house of a private citizen, to whom she had been indebted for hospitality since her arrival in England, to the dwelling churlishly and tardily provided for her by her husband's advisers. For a man with a good coat and hat it was a safe precaution, in order to preserve those luxuries, to mount, on that particular morning, a white cockade—the Queen's colour. This would at once insure him a safe passage through the crowd, and identify him as an advocate of Queen Caroline, Parliamentary Reform, Religious Liberty, and Harry Brougham; and, consequently, the adversary of George the Fourth, Manchester Yeomanry, high-priced loaves,

and my Lords Wellington, Eldon, and Castlereagh. It was not advisable to speak with an Italian accent, or to display an Italian cast of countenance in public, on that morning; for, a week ago, a dozen people of that nationality, landing at Dover, had been made liberally acquainted with the British institution of the brickbat, on the mere suspicion of their having been fetched over to bear false witness against the Queen. It was rumoured, also, that a number of Italian witnesses had been smuggled into London for the approaching trial, and were safely housed in snug but expensive lodgings in the vicinity of the Parliament House—protected by a strong guard of soldiers—which, of course, made the excitable British public rather anxious to get at them.

The *cortège* proceeded through the Park and out at Kensington Gate. Kensington declared itself on the Queen's side with remarkable hardihood—not altogether surprising, considering that her Majesty was about to reside within a mile or so of the township, and there were shops in Kensington, even then as now. The partisanship, however, was not by any means universal. White favours, banners, emblazonments of "C. R.," "Long live the Queen," and so forth, were the rule; but many a goodly mansion showed a sullen, dark exterior (its proprietor paying the price of his unpopularity afterwards in a glazier's bill), to prove that George the Fourth and Lord

Chancellor Eldon still had friends. He must be rather a sorry King, or a very poor sort of Lord Chancellor, who can manage to keep none!

Beyond Kensington Church—not many yards from Holland Park—stood a spacious mansion, whose windows were in no danger whatever. The house no longer exists. It is no great loss. For it was built in that most detestable blot on English history, the reign of Charles the Second; and was low-browed, beetling, narrow, expensive, and meretricious, like everything that took its tone or dimensions from that indifferent jester and atrocious scoundrel. It was uglier, if possible, than the row of "genteel private residences within a convenient distance" that has replaced it in our own time. Still there was a good deal of it, and, with several acres of ground at the back overgrown with avenues of elm and mulberry, which the Carolan taste had not been able to shave with pumice-stone, stifle with periwigs, tie up with ribbons, or convert into French money, it still displayed certain aspects of natural beauty, and, consequently, real value.

The house was close to the road, and possessed a balcony. This was gaily festooned with white flowers, arranged in devices complimentary to the Queen.

The Queen's partisans (not, for the most part, remarkable for whiteness themselves) appeared to take

this dwelling under their especial patronage. The balcony was thronged by well-dressed people bearing the Queen's colour. These, the populace cheered vociferously, by no means averse to the receipt, in compensation, of certain silver medallions thrown to them from time to time—which, from their colour, were, of course, in keeping with the occasion.

On the balcony sat a lovely girl in white satin, bedizened over with roses of the same colour, and silver ornaments. Near her stood a tall, handsome young man, dressed in the height of the fashion. The glances they exchanged from time to time explained their relative positions most satisfactorily.

I have said that the gentleman was dressed in the height of the fashion. What that was I dare not attempt to depict. It would make us both ill, reader.

The young lady was an heiress, the owner of the ugly, red-brick, Charles-the-Second mansion, and of many much more valuable possessions, including the heart of the gentleman in the indescribable costume.

Were you ever beloved, reader, by a beautiful, virtuous, and accomplished girl? Don't be in a hurry to say, "Well, yes," "slightly," "I should *rather* think so," or anything of that kind, as the universal human vanities may prompt you to do. For it is an experience that does not happen to every man, even once in a life-time. When it does, it is a most delightful, but, at the same time, alarmingly responsible

state of things. To find, as it were, a lovely pair of hands clasped about your neck, and a sweet, trusting creature, their owner, spinning joyously and confidently round you, never for a moment doubting your strength and uprightness to support her, pleasantly whirling. To find a lithe, exquisite, fairy-like being, whom you would gladly set in an exalted shrine of gold and crystal, to fall down before and worship, persisting in worshipping *you*—great hulking, stubble-chinned, of-the-earth-earthiest monster, as you are—as though a bright golden guinea should come to a huge cart-wheel, George-the-Third penny, and say, "I love you, penny; you are so much bigger than I. You are worth ten of me. I am nothing but a poor quarter of an ounce of pale, useless gold. Take care of me, and protect me with your big, round shadow." The penny, of course, does not like to confess that his market value is only a two-hundred-and-fifty-second part of that of the precious little guinea. The guinea wouldn't believe him if he did; or, if she did believe him, might fall out of love with him—a state of things the penny would naturally object to. He must fain keep up the deception, let him be the honestest penny that ever was turned. It is a very embarrassing condition for a penny to be placed in. If you, O reader! have ever been really under such circumstances, you must have found it so. A woman, whom love has made you believe an angel, and who,

by the same agency, acting upon a more susceptible organisation, has been made to look upon you as a god! How if you cannot sustain the illusion? And how when it breaks down? Will she love you then as now? You must be miserable—for all your raptures—under these trying circumstances, unless you are a demigod, and aware of your strength, or a conceited puppy, and utterly unconscious of your incapacity!

The young gentleman on the balcony was much in this condition. And being neither a demigod, nor altogether a puppy, was made uncomfortable by it. But Queen Caroline was coming along the Kensington Road, with a band of music in front, and Alderman Wood bowing, on horseback, by the side of her new barouche. A cavalcade of gentlemen from Hammersmith, with white favours in their hats, were advancing to welcome the *cortège*. Charity children were marshalled in procession along the footpaths. The church-bells pealed. The mob shouted. There was every excuse for forgetting even one's lady-love at such a moment, if the lady-love would let one. But as the Queen's approach was signalled by deafening shouts beneath, the young lady of the balcony, in the white satin and roses, seized the hand of the young gentleman, her neighbour, and said to him, with eyes flashing full of enthusiasm,

"Dear Frank! here is a triumph of a Queen's—of

a woman's rights! Listen to these shouts. Look at these upturned faces. And to think how greatly you have contributed to these results!"

"Dearest Bell," Mr. Frank replied, "your partiality exaggerates."

"Never tell me. They have read the book—half of them at least. In that woman they see Anne Boleyn. She and her cause, which is every woman's cause and every man's—Truth's, Heaven's own cause—have no such eloquent advocate. If she knew that you were here!"

"I am afraid she doesn't know there is such a person in existence," said the gifted author of *Anne Boleyn, and other Poems*, blushing up to his cocked hat, but not looking, on the whole, displeased.

"I tell you she must," said Miss Bell, waving her embroidered handkerchief with an enthusiastic shout of "God save the Queen!" which drew a great deal of the public attention from Queen Caroline to the much more attractive person of Miss Isabel Evershed.

"King, Castlereagh, and Constitution!" said a voice, playfully, in her ear—very quietly, you may be sure; as to give public utterance to such a sentiment would have been a dangerous pleasantry.

The young lady turned round, and beheld a gentleman—not nearly so handsome as our favoured poet, but of about the same age; slightly built, fair—too

fair perhaps—and somewhat weak-eyed, but intelligent and kind-looking.

"Dear Charley," said the young lady, extending her beautiful hand to the new-comer with a smile of affectionate welcome.

"The first time you have called me 'dear' or 'Charley' for many a day, Cousin Bell," said the gentleman, with something of sadness in his smile. "But to earn even that was worth some sacrifice. Not so great as the one I have made, though. This, I need scarcely ask, is Mr. Frank Gerald?"

"It is. This is my cousin Charles, Frank, to whom we are so much indebted."

"I am glad to know you, sir," said Mr. Charles Evershed, shaking Frank's hand warmly, scrutinising him at the same time with some keenness. "You have supplanted me in the prospect of no ordinary treasure" (he glanced at his fair cousin as he spoke); "but I must try and console myself that your having succeeded in doing so is a proof of extraordinary merit on your part. Eh, Bell?"

"You may indeed, Charley."

"My merit can never be equal to my fortune, sir," said Frank, with real humility. "I must strive to deserve it as much as possible."

"Not an encouraging matrimonial example below there," said Cousin Charles, gaily pointing to the Queen's carriage, that was just passing. "By the

way, I don't know that it is altogether safe for me to show on this balcony. If Mr. Alderman Wood should recognise an humble member of his Majesty's ministry, he might mention it to a few of his friends with the dingy countenances. And in that case, Miss Bell, I am afraid your white garlands would prove but indifferent shutters to your window-panes. My God!"

The speaker stopped abruptly, and clung to the balcony, trembling and horror-stricken.

"What, Charles! You look as if you had seen a ghost."

"Curse him! I wish I had," was the reply, in a choking, gurgling voice. "But he's flesh and blood still. Look!"

Charles pointed fiercely to a figure in the crowd, and darted away from the balcony, hiding his face in his hands.

The young lady glanced in the direction indicated, and caught a glimpse of a lithe, well-looking, middle-aged man, in a horseman's cloak, who, after whispering in the ear of a powerful, half-drunken ruffian, decorated with a white favour, disappeared among the throng.

"Whom has he seen?" Frank inquired.

"His father," Bell answered, in a scarcely audible voice.

And here occurred a circumstance which will

appear incredible, or exaggerated, if not prepared for, but which the sequel will explain as a perfectly natural consequence. Frank, before he had time to ask an explanation of Cousin Charles's remarkably unfilial expressions, uttered an exclamation of astonishment and alarm, not unlike that of the gentleman alluded to. Miss Evershed looked in her lover's face, and saw that it wore an expression almost the exact counterpart of her cousin's.

"Good heavens, Frank! what have *you* seen?"

"Nothing. They are ill-treating a man—that is all. Look! They will kill him."

Mr. Frank Gerald's explanation lacked candour. The truth was he had seen *his* father, too—under the following circumstances.

Standing at bay, with his back to a wall opposite the house with the balcony, was Miles Cassidy, with all his fierce Irish nature aroused, protecting a bleeding wretch, who lay cowering beneath his calves, from the fury of the mob, and whose face was already fearfully cut in several places by stones and other missiles. Miles was in his best clothes—a blue coat with gilt buttons, and breeches, and an exuberance of coarse, snowy linen. His hat was on the pavement, and his right hand grasped his inseparable cudgel in a business-like manner, suggestive of Donnybrook Fair in its palmiest days. His *protégé* was evidently a foreigner.

"Down with Italian spies, informers, and false witnesses!" shouted the crowd.

"Faix, an' he is down low enough," said Miles, in his most thundering voice. "Whatever he is, the first man that touches him will pass over me. You dhurthy bosthoons! Where 's the man of you to face a man that 's a raal man, and not a poor, withered spalpeen, the likes o' that, and him a sthranger in the land?"

"Down with the tyrants and the henemies of reform!" said a metropolitan patriot, helping himself to a neighbour's pocket-handkerchief.

"He 's one of Castletree's Hirish," said a voice.

"Let that lying blackguard come forward and prove his words on a man that fit for Liberty with swoord and musket when ye were robbing the henroosts," said Mr. Cassidy, with more force than elegance.

"What 's the matter, father?" said a fine, stalwart young man, of a sporting aspect, pushing through the crowd, and placing himself at Miles Cassidy's side.

"Stand by me, darlin'," said Miles. "They 're for ill-thrating this poor, helpless crathur, that 's hurt already, and can't defind himself, or spake their language."

"Who is he?" inquired Edward Cassidy.

"He 's von of them Italian miscreants as has come

over to swear false witness agin the sweet Kiveen," said a sentimental Cockney.

"How do you know?" Ted inquired.

"No vero, Signor. Gentleman's valet—povero Italiano—God save Queen," jabbered the terrified object of their persecution. "My master want kill me—he tell that man throw stone."

He pointed at the Herculean bully to whom the man in the cloak had been observed by Miss Evershed to whisper.

"Well, the man seems badly hurt, and wants attention," said Edward, calmly. "And no one shall injure him, if my father and I can prevent it. And I should advise you to take our measure before you attempt to touch either of us."

"Horroo! that's yer sowl!" said Mr. Cassidy, rather eager for the fray than otherwise.

"Now, look here, master," said the big bully, who was half drunk; "we don't want a row with either of you."

"Maybe not," said Mr. Cassidy, caressing his cudgel affectionately.

"But that man's a Heldonite and a spy, and we want him for a ducking."

"I am pretty nearly your weight," said Edward, with perfect composure; "while you are drunk, and I am sober. And I should warn you that I am one of the best bruisers in Oxford."

"D—n Hoxford, and you, too," said the ruffian, making a dart towards his prey. Ned Cassidy met his advance with a ringing blow on the temple, that laid him senseless like an ox.

The crowd closed in, and the struggle became Homeric. Mr. Cassidy enjoyed himself immensely. He had not indulged in the national luxury of a fight for many years, and he laid about him to the right and to the left with immense gusto. Ted hammered away like a young Ajax.

The strife was, of course, unequal; and the father and son were getting worsted by numbers, when they received an unexpected reinforcement.

Mr. Frank Gerald, the accomplished poet, to the horror and astonishment of his shrieking betrothed, sprang over the balcony, hung to it a second by his hands, dropped himself on to the door-step, and, with a ringing shout of "Gown, to the rescue!" mingled with the combatants.

"Frank!"

"Father! Ted!"

The recognition was instantaneous.

Mr. Cassidy, with a delighted whoop, spun his cudgel in the air, caught it, and renewed the attack, exclaiming, with a radiant visage,

"With the pair of 'em to back me, ye may bring the devil and all his angels!"

CHAPTER VIII.

THE PRODIGAL SON.

THERE is at least this advantage in witnessing a thoroughly good street row, that it restores your faith in the battle-pieces of the old poets and dramatists—a faith apt to be weakened by an acquaintance with the organised principles of modern military science. In a street row we see warfare on its most primitive basis, and are made to understand how, in barbarous or semi-civilised ages, the issue of a battle must mainly have depended upon the physical strength and prowess of the leaders, and how the mere *oi polloi*, the supernumeraries, the "chaff and bran, porridge after meat," having been knocked about a good deal in an unmeaning fashion, must speedily have subsided into mere spectators, or encumbrances, of the hand-to-hand engagements between their superiors. This reconciles us to the probability of Hotspur being quietly slain "in another part of the field," by the Prince of Wales's own hand, without the slightest

interference from the opposing hosts. Hector pursued by Achilles round the city walls, with the Greeks and Trojans looking on, becomes quite intelligible. "Exeunt Macbeth and Macduff, fighting," and "Enter Paris and Menelaus, ditto," appear perfectly *selon les règles* of ancient warfare.

The conflict in which we left the enterprising firm of Cassidy and Sons so actively engaged was an illustration of this principle. The original *casus belli* was soon lost sight of (literally, as well as figuratively, since the rescued Italian sneaked off at an early stage of the hostilities), and the inferior combatants speedily became mere lookers-on. The engagement resolved itself into a triad of single combats between the Messrs. Cassidy and their individual opponents. The big fellow, a coal-heaver, whom Ted had knocked down at the outset, but out of whom the fight had by no means been ejected, returned to the charge, considerably sobered, and, with some chivalry, selected Mr. Cassidy, senior, as his most appropriate match in size and weight. Mr. Cassidy tossed his cudgel away, and accepted the challenge affably—adopting the British weapons, which he handled quite as cleverly as he did the martial plant of his native isle. Ted's adversary, from the striking of the first blow, had been a brawny young Thames waterman, whose "skill and dexterity" in the management of his fists were certainly a credit to his proverbially ingenious order. Frank had

closed with a stalwart costermonger; and he, alone of our trio, was over-weighted by his antagonist. Pluck and science, however, asserted themselves manfully, in his case, against bone and muscle, for some time.

Meantime, Miss Evershed from her distant balcony (too remote from the scene of action for the recognition of her lover and his kinsmen to have been observed by her), remained like

> "Eliza on the wood-crowned height,
> O'er Minden's plain spectatress of the fight."

In vain she screamed for help. Her guests in the drawing-room consisted only of ladies and one elderly gentleman. Her cousin Charles had disappeared, and was, in fact, in the grounds at the back, keeping out of the way—not of the fight, of which he had no knowledge, but of his dreaded father. In vain she commanded her majestic footmen to go to the rescue of Mr. Gerald, on pain of instant dismissal. Those noble beings behaved with the usual heroism of their distinguished order, and preferred resignation of office to accepting a post of activity and peril. There was one base exception in the person of an under-butler, who, wholly forgetful of what was due to his station, volunteered to slip round by the back-door in search of officers. But he was very young!

The waterman, having gone down three distinct

times before the merciless fist of Ted, philosophically declared that he had had enough, and withdrew hastily from the field, with a friendly nod to his victor. Mr. Cassidy, senior, was not much longer in reducing his man to utter subjection. The issue of Frank's combat alone remained doubtful, when a formidable body of constabulary made their appearance, coming at a brisk trot from the direction of London. At the sight of this reinforcement the gallant crowd retreated towards Hammersmith, yelling as a matter of course, and throwing a few stones by way of parting *souvenirs*.

Frank's assailant turned, apparently to fly, and Frank dropped his guard. Perhaps it was a premeditated *ruse*, or perhaps a sudden after-thought of spitefulness; but, at any rate, the costermonger wheeled rapidly round, and felled Frank to the earth by an unexpected blow on the temple. This done, he scampered away, as fast as his legs would carry him, after his fellow ragamuffins.

The ground being slippery, Frank fell with his whole weight on the left side of his head, which unluckily struck against a large jutting stone, of which there were several at intervals, supporting the narrow, raised footpath. He lay bleeding, and apparently lifeless.

Mr. Cassidy, who had recovered his cudgel, strode forward and lifted his long-lost darling in his arms,

as easily as if he had been still an infant. Ted also rushed to his brother's assistance.

The constables, of whom there was a very large number, professional and special, were advancing rapidly. Stones were still flying in their direction, aimed by the retreating mob. Mr. Cassidy ran hither and thither in search of a harbour of refuge, in several directions, before he perceived Miss Evershed, with a livid face, holding her own street-door open, and screaming to them to carry the wounded man in-doors.

At the sound of her voice Frank opened his eyes, and said hurriedly, in low, imploring tones: "Father —Ted—I am perhaps killed—do not expose me *there*, to her—do not say who I am—don't know me. I have done no great wrong. I will explain; but not here—not now ——"

He had fainted again.

Miles Cassidy's arms trembled so, that he feared he would drop his precious burden. He stood irresolute. And he had found his long-lost son for this! To be repudiated by him! To be asked to aid him in Heaven knew what deception! But this was no time for reflection or hesitation.

"What are the fools dawdling about?" screamed Miss Bell, in anything but tones of sweetness, and stamping her pretty foot with vexation. "Bring him in, fellow!"

Miles obeyed sullenly, but promptly. As they crossed the threshold, Ted pressed his father's arm, and asked him by an imploring glance to accede to Frank's request. Miles read the look correctly, and nodded a rueful assent to the proposition.

Frank was carried into a ground-floor sitting-room, which was of course speedily encumbered with a superabundance of officious persons, proposing a score different remedies at once. A matronly old housekeeper appeared the most sensible person present, as, having dispatched a messenger in search of a doctor, and ordered bandages and domestic remedies to be fetched in the mean time, she began to wash and examine the patient's wounds with great coolness and presence of mind.

While this was being done, Miss Bell Evershed conducted herself in a perfectly natural, but, as people who have been educated and refined out of all knowledge of nature would call, an excessively improper manner. That is, she threw herself on her knees beside the couch, and began to kiss the sufferer's bleeding hands and face passionately, entreating him through her tears to speak to her.

Frank opened his eyes again, but they were not turned upon poor Bell. They rolled languidly, remorsefully, still imploringly, in the direction of his father and brother—mutely asking them a question

which they understood perfectly: "Are you going to betray me or not?"

Ted at once divined the necessity of relieving his brother's anxiety and apprehensions, and, at the same time, the happiest means of doing so. He answered the appeal promptly, by saying:

"I really don't think the gentleman is seriously hurt;" and, nudging Miles significantly, he added: "Do you, father?"

"No, darlin', I don't," Miles answered, after several spasmodic gulps. "I trust the—the *gintleman* will do well, I 'm sure."

Frank gave them a grateful look, heaved a deep sigh, and murmuring faintly:

"I am not much hurt, Bell—don't be alarmed," closed his eyes again.

A doctor soon made his appearance and examined the wounds, which he pronounced serious, but attended with no immediate danger, provided the patient could be kept quiet (Quiet! alas, poor Frank! with an angry conscience incensed against him!) and fever avoided. He ordered the sick man to be carried to bed immediately.

Miles Cassidy and Ted volunteered their services as porters.

Now Miss Bell Evershed did not like either the appearance or the manners of these two officious and plebeian strangers. She detested them already, as

perhaps the unintentional, but certainly unworthy causes, of her beloved Frank's dilemma. It was illogical, perhaps, but perfectly natural. For though I am proud to avow myself as staunch a woman-worshipper as the most devoted of my Scandinavian ancestors (for I believe I am descended from seafaring Norsemen of some kind, though they may have been only sons of the humblest sea-cooks in Canute's or Guthrum's fleets), yet I do not carry my blind admiration of the divine sex so far as to believe that they base the majority of their good deeds upon the dictates of reason. Miss Bell Evershed resented the proposed interference of the Irishman and his son as an unpardonable liberty.

"Thank you," she said, coldly. "My servants will do all that is necessary. They are greatly attached to Mr. Gerald, and he will be safer in their hands than in those of strangers."

Strangers! This was the cruellest blow the father and brother had yet received. Miles turned aside to wipe away the falling tears he could no longer check. Ted sobbed audibly, which raised him a little in the estimation of Miss Evershed, as being at any rate a warm-hearted young man indeed, who could thus feel for a stranger's sufferings, in spite of his being so dreadfully coarse and presuming.

Frank was placed in an easy chair, and two powerful men-servants were called in to carry him up-stairs.

Having reassured his betrothed by a few more ill-articulated phrases of comfort, he stretched his hand out towards his father.

Miles hesitated. Ted urged him forward by a thrust in the back. Miles obeyed the impulse, and took his wounded son affectionately by the hand.

Even then a reproach was rising to the lips of the choleric Irishman. But as it was bursting for utterance—a look, an expression in the wan olive face and the large southern eyes, gazing wistfully into his own, reminded him of—what? No matter! It brought him back to his old habit of love for his darlings at any sacrifice, through good and through evil. He determined to sustain the deception which he saw so necessary to the peace of the poor sufferer before him, and to do it, as he did everything that he undertook, thoroughly and courageously. So he retained Frank's hand in his own, and said, in a cheering voice:

"Good luck to you, sir! You're a brave man, whatever else ye may be! And I'll think well of ye for *that* to my dying day! Keep up your spirits, sir, and God bless you!"

Miles walked to the window as he saw tears of gratitude roll from poor Frank's eyes. Ted seized the hand that his father had released, and could only kiss it sobbing.

"Well, I'm sure!" thought Miss Bell, with some acerbity. "That's a pretty liberty to take!"

Ted could not help it. It was his dear brother's hand—the hand that had been clasped round the same strong devoted neck with his own, through miles and miles of travel, that had never brought an hour's weariness to them—the hand that had pressed his cheek in their slumbers on many a simple, happy couch—the hand that had broken the same crust, dipped in the same bowl, turned over the same dog's-eared page, plied the same workman's tool with his own! His brother's hand! The brother whom he had always loved, revered, fought for, and sworn by! The brother whom he had so long lost, and only just found, to lose again more hopelessly than ever! To find him thus wounded in body and mind, under some moral cloud, the nature of which he could only dimly guess at, and to be debarred from tending on—even from speaking to him! Ted's emotional nature was too strong to obey the imposed restraint utterly; so, as I have said, he seized Frank's hand, and kissed it passionately.

Suddenly he divined that the act might be the means of betraying the secret he saw his brother was so anxious to guard. So with sublime presence of mind he turned it off with a laugh, and, addressing himself to Miss Evershed, who, he saw, had observed him, said, loud enough for Frank to hear him as the latter was being borne out of the room:

"Blest if I can ever see a real plucky one in

trouble without doing the briny! And your friend 's an out-and-outer, miss, and no mistake!"

If there be an Accusing and a Recording Spirit in the Chancery of Good-breeding—as there are supposed to be in an infinitely higher court—I trust that when the intentionally exaggerated vulgarity of Mr. Edward Cassidy's expression was entered in the charge-sheet, the last-mentioned official felt himself justified in blotting out the offence with a drop of rose-water.

"Vulgar wretch!" thought Miss Bell, thinking only of her beloved Frank, and apprehensive that this display of emotion on the part of the stranger might add to his excitement. But seeing that the movement had produced a gratified expression on the face of Frank, she relented, and favoured Ted with a half smile of approval.

"I cannot wonder at anybody being impressed with admiration of his noble nature!" she condescended to say, when she was left alone with her two strange visitors. "I believe he would sacrifice himself for any living creature. He saved my life, and a life as dear to me as my own, at a time when he knew no more of me than he does of you two at the present moment. Your gratitude is highly creditable to you — though, of course, perfectly natural."

This was a very bitter pill to swallow, indeed.

But the father and son swallowed it—a feat, however, which the former could only achieve by saying hurriedly:

"My sarvice to you, ma'am. Good morning. Come Ted, darlin'."

This movement awakened Miss Evershed's natural instincts of justice and hospitality.

"Pray, do not leave us so hurriedly," she said. "Perhaps you have received some injuries yourselves that require attention?"

"Divil the one, ma'am, saving yer presence! We 're of the tough sort—me and Ted."

"But really I am indebted to you. Though Mr. Gerald has been injured on your account, yet you certainly stood by him very bravely; and any recompense in my power ——"

"Recompense!" thundered Miles Cassidy, unable longer to contain himself. "By the holy ——"

"Father, be quiet!" said Ted. "There 's no offence meant on either side, miss, I'm sure. But you didn't quite understand the sort of people you were addressing when you offered anything of the kind. Besides, the gentleman who is hurt came to our help, not we to his."

"I sincerely beg your pardon if I offended you," said Bell. "I was far from intending to do so. I thought I was merely carrying out Mr. Gerald's wishes in offering to do you any service in my power.

I saw that he felt, as it were, obliged to you. But, then, he is so noble-hearted to all the world ——"

"A moment, *avourneen*," said Miles. "Excuse an ould man's freedom, my dear" (this was just what Miss Bell was not disposed to do): "is Mr. —— Gerald your husband?"

Bell's face flushed indignantly as she replied:

"That is a very impertinent question; but I will answer it plainly. Mr. Gerald is about to become my husband. Does the matter concern you?"

"Not the laste, darlin'; not the laste," said Cassidy, in softened tones. "And I humbly ax your pardon for my boldness. But I'm an old boy of Ninety-eight ('What a dreadful old story-teller!' thought Miss Bell, looking at the scarcely grizzled head of the speaker), and I've seen a dale of fighting in my time. And when ye've fit by the side of a man, ye take an interest in him. I wish him long life and merit to desarve ye, ma'am; for ye look good, and bright, and honest, though a thrifle proud, maybe."

Miss Bell did not relish the compliment in the least, while she resented the concluding qualifications enormously. Altogether she looked upon Mr. Cassidy and his son, the former especially, as very coarse, presuming, objectionable specimens of the lower orders. However, they were for the present her guests, and it was evidently Frank's wish that they

should be well treated. So she said, with as much cordiality as she could assume towards such people:

"Let me, at least, offer you some refreshment before you leave."

"Thank ye, ma'am, kindly. Not in this house, if ye plaze. No offince, but we're losing our time. My sarvice to ye once more."

Miles had gained the street door in a few angry strides, when Ted turned on the threshold of the parlour, and said to Miss Evershed:

"You will excuse my freedom, miss; but if you will tell Mr. ——"

"Mr. Frank Gerald."

"That the young man that he helped to-day—Edward Cassidy—though the name is of no consequence—is very much indebted to him, and will take the liberty to call or send to-morrow to inquire how he's getting on. And if you 'll please to tell him, neither my father nor myself is hurt at all, I think he would like to hear it. I know I should, in his place. It might please him, you know, to hear *he* didn't get his hurt for nothing."

"I will be sure to tell him."

"Thank you, miss. Good morning."

"Good morning."

"At any rate the son is not quite such a savage as the father," said Bell to herself. "But, really, try what you will with the lower orders, they are a most

thankless class to deal with. To think that my dear, refined Frank should have risked a single drop of his precious blood for such people! They did seem impressed with a sense of his bravery, it is true. But as if anybody could help that."

Poor little Miss Bell! She dabbled her little fingers in ink sometimes, and flattered herself she was a democrat of the most advanced views. She propounded the most daring revolutionary theories in conversation, and now and then in a feeble manner—through the medium of certain accommodating literary *cameræ obscuræ*—in print. She read and quoted the most violent passages of Bentham, Cobbett, Hunt,—ay, and even Volney, Paine, Byron, and Shelley—as if she understood, and believed in, all they asserted. She was for the abolition of all monarchies and privileged classes whatsoever. She was in the habit of asserting loudly, at the same time very sweetly, the equality of mankind! But oh! if a lady's maid had dared to appear before her in a head-dress at all resembling her own! If a footman had proposed to mount behind her carriage arrayed in the dignity of "plain clothes!" In a word, Miss Bell Evershed was at heart—as every true woman is—a thorough-paced aristocrat. But how angry she would have been had you told her so!

Miles Cassidy, with his brows knit into furrows, his lips firmly set, now twining his right arm con-

vulsively round his cudgel, like the snakes about Laocoön's limbs, now grasping that faithful weapon fiercely in the centre, or spinning it round between his fingers, as in eagerness for the approach of backward foes; hugging his one remaining son tightly to his side, as it were, in custody, strode in silence towards London.

Ted, whose own heart was too full for words, respected his parent's emotions. Father and son never exchanged a word till they had left Kensington far in the rear, and the roofs of Knightsbridge were in sight; then Miles broke silence abruptly, with the question:

"Will he take hurt, think ye?"

"I hope not, father; I'll go back to-night and see."

"Do, *alanna*."

And they walked on again for some yards without speaking. Miles recommenced:

"What does it mane? What desate is he practising? Has the thraining I've given him made a villain of him?"

"He hit out rather too well for that in the mill, father," said Ted, reverentially.

"Thrue for you, and so he did. But it's for the purty colleen there—proud bit of flesh though she is, I'm fearing. Going to be married, she said. If he's practised any desate upon her—passed himself

for what he is not—faix, there's time to stop his capers, and he'll find Miles Cassidy the man to do it."

"I'm not frightened, father," said Ted. "He's dropped our name, that's all. He'd do nothing to disgrace it, I'll take my oath. If he's won the girl, it's by fair means, depend upon it. Isn't he a fit match for the best woman on earth? But we had him at a disadvantage. He wasn't himself. He was knocked out of all time, and we were the cause of it. It would have been a foul blow on our side to come down on him when he was off his guard. It's best as it is for the moment. Take my word, he'll clear all up, and we shall find him sound—wind, limb, and mettle."

A fearful change had come over Miles Cassidy, who seemed scarcely to listen to what his son was saying. Tears were streaming down his face. He had removed his hat from his head, which he thrust upward, as if thirsting for more air and light. His lips moved as if they were muttering words, though none were audible. His eyebrows clenched together at their union, and elevated painfully at either extremity of the forehead, with the starting blue eyes beneath, gave that expression of indecision already mentioned as habitual to his face, but now exaggerated almost to the appearance of insanity. He had increased his speed, too, gradually, but rapidly, like that of a locomotive engine newly started, till his stalwart son

could scarcely keep pace with the movement of his gigantic limbs.

"Father—dear father! What is the matter?"

Miles walked faster and faster still. With his eyes dilating more wildly than ever, he said, hoarsely, not in answer to his son's question, but addressing himself to vacancy:

"The time 's coming when I 'm to know. I feel it. I thought the question buried, and that I should never want it answered. But it 's come up again like a ghost, and an answer it will and shall have, or I 'll die."

"Dear father," said Ted, in a broken voice, "whatever is on your mind let me share the weight of it. With all my faults, want of love for you has never been one."

Miles checked his pace abruptly. He turned round, and placed a hand on each of Edward's shoulders—holding the latter out at arm's length, and looking searchingly in his face. The young man felt like an atom in his convulsive grasp.

"No—never!" said Miles, in a thick unnatural voice. "You 're my son. Aren't you?"

"Oh, father!"

"Let me know, though—Holy God, direct me! Look at me hard in the face. Open your eyes—wide; and keep the face quiet, if ye can. It 's no harm I mean ye, darlin'—ye know that well. Smile,

alanna! thry and look as if ye wur a purty child still on a poor boy's knee, that had worked hard and thravelled far for ye, as if ye was still happy and innocent, never having done wrong, or known it."

Edward strove to obey his father's strange injunctions to the best of his ability. Miles gazed intently in his face for a few seconds: then releasing the young man from his grasp, he threw up his arms wildly, exclaiming:

"Holy Mother! it's the same eyes, the two of them! But why both? And, oh! in God's name, —WHICH?"

Miles Cassidy flung himself on his knees in the public road, crouching, sobbing, and clutching his hair in a paroxysm of passion.

It was now Ted's turn to be strong. He lifted his father—who was trembling all over—from his abject position, as he said, caressingly:

"Father! what is this? I have often heard you speak in this strain, but never so violently. Why conceal anything from me? Am I not your son?"

By a kind of cataleptic effort, Miles Cassidy regained his full height, and once more regarded the young man keenly, holding him, as before, at arm's length by the shoulder.

"Yes, ye are—ye must be. I pray to God it is so. Your eyes—only the eyes—are as like hers as

his own are. But, then, you're bigger, and like me in build. Your hair is nearer my colour than his. You are a plain working-man, with a bit of the rollicking divil in you, as I had myself when a gossoon; and ye stick to the ould nest—though ye do scratch up divils' divarshin in it betimes—while he—the fine gintleman—he 's like a duck that an ould hen has hatched out of the egg: as soon as he feels his fine glossy feathers he takes to the wather, and swims away with his own kind."

"You are labouring under some strange delusion, father. We are both your sons. Remember how much alike we were as children."

"There 's the wondher, dear, that 's been addling this poor brain of mine these two-and-twenty year. Many's the night of late, since he 's deserted us, I 've watched you in your sleep, and seen a look of them that 's gone in your happy smiling face, that tould me my own son was left to me. But when I saw him, awhile agone, thinking he 'd got his death stroke, with his pale yellow face, with the black brows and lashes, and the bit of a blue mouth, and the round wax forehead, it was so like *hers* on that bed! Holy God, direct me, and tell me which, before I die!"

"Father, do tell me all. I am sure you are the victim of some strange fancy that might be easily cleared up. I 'll lay my life Frank is as much your

son as I am. You cannot suspect our mother, whose memory you revere so?"

Miles Cassidy turned fiercely upon him and raised his cudgel. Ted stood meekly to receive the threatened blow, and thereby escaped it. Miles dropped his arm.

"I was spared that sin, anyhow," he said humbly. "I thought I'd heard blasphemy against the purest saint in heaven, and was for killing the man that spoke it—son or no son. But you've brought me to myself, darlin'. See! we're getting into crowded parts. Take care of me. Thrate me as a child. There's many things I should have tould ye of by rights long ago: but they heat my brain to think of, and up to this time I've had to keep it cool for all your sakes. I've had a long voyage to make, darlin', through bad weather, and all in the dark. I'm a mighty poor sailor. I've had neither rudder, nor compass, nor sails; and I'm all at sea yet, though the cock-boat's still afloat. God send it safe into port, with a fair account to the owners."

So habitual had been Miles Cassidy's self-control over his hot Celtic nature hitherto, that Ted could only look upon the foregoing outburst of simple imagery, for which he remembered no precedent—and which had been uttered in a weak, mournful voice —as an aberration of intellect on his father's part. He trembled for his parent's reason, even for his life.

He called a hackney-coach at Knightsbridge, and ordered the driver to proceed to the inn near Holborn, where they were staying.

Miss Bell Evershed sat up with her patient all that night, in defiance of the protestations of a highly respectable *chaperone*, who was very much shocked, indeed. If ever a man had a pleasant salve for a fractured skull, it must have been experienced by Mr. Frank Gerald, *alias* Cassidy, in the society and devo-

tion of his beautiful and accomplished betrothed. Bell bathed his head and hands for him incessantly, and administered his medicines punctually at the appointed hours. But, alas! she little knew that she was counteracting all her soothing influences by the uncomfortable process of heaping coals of fire upon the invalid's broken head, which she did constantly by a series of violent animadversions upon the vulgarity and unworthiness of the ignoble strangers, in whose behalf her beloved Frank had so chivalrously risked his priceless life.

CHAPTER IX.

A RETROSPECT.

About a year before the events narrated in the last three chapters, "a solitary horseman" (what is the use of conceitedly departing from these fine old conventionalities?) "might have been seen wending his way" along a private road that ran through a manorial estate, situated some eleven miles from Oxford, and perhaps eight from the market-town of A——. A more exact definition of its locality is unnecessary.

The road, which was about half a mile long, was flanked on one side by a piece of ornamental water, extending to its full length, and on the other by a strongly fenced wood, rising at a rapid ascent, and eminently suggestive, by its sights and sounds, of pointers, double-barrelled Mantons, and the approaching first of September. Beyond this wood ran an overgrown lawn, or an under-sized park, whichever you please, surmounted by the manor-house, a goodly

terraced building in the Tudor style, but of no princely dimensions. The latter, however, were not visible from the water-side.

Though the road, as has been stated, was private property, it belonged to a portion of the estate to which, by the courtesy of the proprietors, the public was admitted, on the not exorbitant condition of good behaviour, for the enjoyment of the beautiful promenades and prospects it afforded. No great concession after all, for a more out-of-the-way place in central England than Brayle Manor can scarcely be conceived, and casual visitors were few and far between. I mention the fact to indicate that the presence of our "solitary horseman" in such a spot was no proof of his being an *habitué* of the manor-house. That equestrian would have been only too delighted to find himself recognised in such a capacity.

He was mounted on a faultless bay, which he rode to perfection. He was remarkably well-looking, and dressed in the very height of that detestable fashion, of which enough has already been said in these pages. Had you seen him, and been told that he was a Bachelor of Arts from Oxford, you would not have been surprised. Had you been also informed that he was a carpenter's foreman, you would have been astonished and most likely incredulous. And yet he was both.

For it was Frank Cassidy, at that stage of his chequered fortunes whereof a glimpse has been already afforded you, in the conversation between Biddy and Mr. Steadman, when the strife between himself and his father had commenced. Frank had recently taken a good degree at St. Ogive's, after which, on being peremptorily ordered by his father to choose between an academical and a mechanical career (the wishes of the senior being strongly in favour of his adopting the latter), he had withdrawn his name in dudgeon from the books of his college and "buckled to business," as unwilling a horse as ever was harnessed. For many reasons the change in his situation would have been acceptable to him. The sneers and coldness of his fellow-gownsmen—with a few honourable exceptions of the Steadman school—as to his origin and connections, had rendered college life insupportable to him. And he would have been resigned, if not absolutely glad, to sink into what Society constantly assured him was his normal position; but that it was made hateful to him by certain other reasons, of which the reader has already had some inkling, and which will soon be made more distinctly apparent.

But how comes it that Frank Cassidy—officially installed as his father's right-hand man—was permitted to be riding about, on a handsome bay mare, *point device* in his attire, at two o'clock on an August

afternoon—that of a week day, too!—eleven miles from the scene of his daily labours?

It happened thus. Miles Cassidy, though a tremendous stickler for his bond on all occasions, was no hard taskmaster. All he stipulated was, that his sons should serve him faithfully and diligently. In return for this, he paid them liberally, and with a nice adjustment to the value of their services, leaving them the uncontrolled masters of their own leisure and earnings. Miles was now in a really good way of business, and often undertook large contracts. It was in the organisation and direction of these, rather than by mere manual labour, he felt that the intellect and acquirements of Frank would be so valuable to the common cause. In this he was not mistaken. Frank, on quitting college, plunged into the business with a sort of desperate ardour, at first delighting his father by his skill and diligence. Frank's real vocation in fact—had not his pride and prejudice prevented him from seeing it—was that of a mechanician. His poetry, of which he entertained so high an opinion, and which obtained for him a short-lived popularity, was nothing but a skilful mathematical arrangement of sound, rhetoric, and epigram. At any rate Frank proved a most valuable acquisition to "the business," and Mr. Cassidy only deplored his son's distaste for it. This distaste he tried to remove by every possible inducement of praise and pudding.

He allowed Frank the amplest justifiable share of their common earnings, and always exhorted him to diligence, that he might have the greater amount of leisure for the pursuit of his own tastes. So far from being averse to seeing his son and manager assume the dress and manners of a gentleman, after business hours, it was his ambition to see him one altogether: "But the tools, darlin', the tools!" he would say; "we must work hard for them first."

As for Ted—who, on having completed a tolerably sound commercial education, had steadily set his face against being sent to college, declaring that he should "learn nothing, but only get into rows with the swells;" he was merely a simple handicraftsman—one of the finest in the world, it is true, when he would apply himself to labour. A man of business, in the superior sense of the term, he certainly was not. But this is not the place to treat of Ted and his peculiarities. Our present business is with Frank and his afternoon ride by the ornamental water of Brayle Manor.

To judge from Master Frank's movements, he was following the not very creditable occupation of spy to an old-fashioned family chariot, that was proceeding leisurely along the smooth white road, a hundred yards or so in advance of him. Frank regulated his horse's speed by that of the vehicle. Once or twice he quickened his pace, as if with the intention of

coming up with or passing it. But his resolution failed him on each occasion.

"No," he said to himself, "they shall not see me this time. What can they think of me, always dogging their steps; unless, perhaps, that I am a highwayman? It is madness—I will ride back, and never——. Confound the old blockhead! he 'll have them into the ditch or the river yet."

The coach (for the vehicle was old-fashioned enough to merit that primitive epithet) certainly did not appear to be under the command of a very skilful Jehu. It "tacked," as the sailors say, from side to side in a most uncomfortable manner. Now and then it would come to a dead standstill, and violent misunderstandings would arise between the old coachman and the almost coeval pair of horses. Occasionally the latter would indulge in a little plunging and kicking, quite unbecoming to their years and gravity—which of course, on their part, was mere presumption on impunity; an abler whip would have resented and suppressed such a liberty immediately. The coach, moreover, though no doubt originally costly, was reduced to that condition, to describe which no adjective exists, except the popular "ramshackle." Frank Cassidy felt really alarmed for the safety of the inmates.

"I 'm half inclined to forget the romantic foolery that brings me here day after day," his soliloquy con-

tinued, "and to persuade myself that it is a positive duty to watch over their safety, if they will be mad enough to trust themselves in such a creaky old machine, at the mercy of such horses and such a driver. At first I used to long for a slight accident to happen to them, that I might come to the rescue in the orthodox fashion; but now, at every jolt they take, my heart leaps to my mouth at the imminent prospect of the Fates taking me at my word."

Of course, nobody ever talks aloud to himself—except on the stage; and I don't think it is customary with any of us to shape our reveries into set sentences. I have recorded the above, as the substance of Mr. Frank Cassidy's reflections on the occasion.

It is, however, certain that within a few moments of their termination he did give loud, distinct, and horrified expression to two words, "*My God!*" and lashed his horse into a gallop, or rather into a series of mad leaps forward. The Fates had taken him at his word with a vengeance!

The carriage was progressing steadily enough for the moment—only that one of the hind wheels had taken it into its axis to come off, and assume an independent career! Frank watched it for some seconds, skipping by itself, playfully, in front of the vehicle, till it fell into the water. Then the carriage slowly began to topple over. Piercing screams in female voices were heard from the interior. A bare

bleeding arm dashed through the uppermost window. The weight of the horses resisted for a brief time, but they were soon dragged into the air by the counterpoise of the vehicle, struggling, plunging, and screaming more horribly than the human voices. Finally, the whole equipage fell into the water with a hideous crash, and the coachman was shot several yards into the stream.

I do not wish to harrow your feelings unfairly, reader. Observe, I have said "crash," not "splash." The water near the shore was barely two feet and a half deep, and its surface was level with the path; so that there was no danger of drowning, or of a deep fall. The carriage touched the bottom almost instantaneously; and the resistance of such water as there was must have been conducive to breaking the shock. Fortunately, too, the stupid driver had brought them close to the water's edge; so that the vehicle fell only on one side, instead of right over: a state of things which might have been attended with fatal consequences.

However, it was a position of real danger, and one in which a lady of the strongest nerves might be excused for dying of fright. There was a probability of the carriage filling with water. The horses, one lying on the other, were plunging madly, rapidly reducing the fore-part of the vehicle to splinters with their hoofs. The ladies might possibly have extri-

cated themselves from their difficulty, by opening the door from within. I do not know how far their presence of mind would have served them in this respect, as Mr. Frank Cassidy was providentially at hand to save them the necessity of exercising it.

Providentially? Well, yes. The policeman who pulls the burglar out by the legs as he is entering your back-parlour window, is there providentially—though you are apt to underrate the intervention, as a matter of course, seeing that it is the policeman's business to be always at the corner of your street with a watchful bull's-eye upon all such offenders. Just so—considering that Mr. Frank Cassidy had been dogging the daily promenades of the ladies in the carriage, almost without exception for two or three weeks; as he was really apprehensive of their incurring danger, and chivalrously anxious to render them service—it is not to be wondered at that he was there in the nick of time. But it might have been otherwise. He might have been detained at home on business. His horse might have shied. His foot might have got entangled in the stirrup. Ten thousand accidents might have happened to prevent his rendering his good offices at the critical moment. So we will stick to the good old adverb, if you please, in all reverence.

Frank's feet touched the earth almost as soon as the carriage touched the water. He wrenched the

door open, and dragged out, first, a young lady, the uppermost, who said, "Grandma' first" (to which Frank paid no sort of attention), and secondly, an old lady, the undermost, seating them both in rapid succession on the shore.

"Joseph!" gasped the old lady, pointing towards the water.

Frank, rightly surmising Joseph to mean the coachman, looked to see what had become of that ill-starred charioteer. Joseph was observed scrambling from a comfortable bed of mud, in which he had been deposited, to a gravel island some fifty yards distant from the shore. Frank felt no further uneasiness on Joseph's account, to whom he felt considerably obliged, it is true, for affording him this brilliant opportunity of succouring "lovely woman in distress;" but who, he thought, deserved a good course of ducking, with rheumatism to follow, as a punishment for his clumsiness. So he determined that Joseph should remain on his desert isle as long as Robinson Crusoe, for any assistance of his.

"Ponies!" said the old lady, extending her hand again.

The ponies (so by courtesy; they were in reality overgrown and enormously overfed Galloways, of vast antiquity), after a few ineffectual plunges in the attempt to recover their perpendicular, had resigned themselves to their condition with the usual philosophy

of their species. They were lying in the water very quietly side by side, with their noses in the air, waiting to be delivered by their friends, with all the easy confidence of a young spendthrift in prison who knows he has a rich mother. Frank unbuckled the traces, and the animals walked gravely to the shore, looking back compassionately at the ruined coach, as if they were sorry to leave an old friend in trouble.

Except that the younger one had inflicted several cuts on her arm in dashing it through the window, neither of the ladies was injured. But they were both very much frightened; and like the young prince, as described in the solitary joke which enlivens the depressing drama of *The Stranger*, "very wet." Their screams had attracted the attention of a neighbouring lodge-keeper, and cloaks, shawls, and restoratives were speedily brought to them. As a matter of course, they were profuse in their gratitude to Frank Cassidy, whom they looked upon as the saviour of their lives. Frank modestly assured them he had saved them from no real danger, except in the possible event of their having been unable to open the door from within, in which case the carriage might have filled with water.

Neither of the ladies would hear of his services being rated at so humble a value.

"Why, good heavens, Bell! look at him!" said the old lady, who was a grey-headed, aristocratic sort

of old body, with a cheerful though rather weak-looking face. "Don't you remember him? God bless my soul, how very odd!"

"It is the gentleman we saw in High Street."

"To be sure. You had your cap and gown on then, sir. And how dreadfully you did give it that poor unfortunate Joseph, to be sure! I was obliged to make him a present to calm his feelings."

"The old scoundrel was going to drive you from the Mitre with one of the buckles of his reins unfastened."

"Don't call him an old scoundrel. He's so sensitive; and he's been in the family so many years. Though, to be sure, he can't hear you, sitting there in the middle of the water, like a seal in the Natural History. If I don't give him at least half-a-guinea, he'll never get over this. But what an odd coincidence that you should be here now!"

This afforded Frank a chance of something like an excuse for his presence. He said: "The fact is, madam, having availed myself very often lately of the privilege of riding through your charming grounds, I have two or three times followed your carriage, really in anticipation of an accident. I trust you will not permit yourself to be driven by so incompetent a person again."

"Ah! Bell has been trusting that for the last six months. But you must know, sir, though a very

quick girl at school, there is one thing I have never been able to learn all my life, and I 'm sixty-eight."

"Indeed! what is that?"

"To say 'No.' I can't do it; can I, Bell?"

"Never to me, grandmamma, at any rate," said the young girl, fondly, wrapping a thick cottager's cloak more tightly round her aged relative's shoulders.

"When I threaten to supersede Joseph, he cries,—I dare say he is crying now,—and declares he will refuse nourishment, and take poison,—though he pronounces it 'pizen,' in a ridiculous manner. But let us walk up to the Hall. I 'm beginning to shiver dreadfully. Be good enough to call out to Joseph that we 'll send somebody to fetch him, and prepare him something warm. And if you will just say to him, at the same time, that it is my intention to present him with a new hat, it may be some alleviation to his sufferings."

Frank obeyed the order. The old lady requested his arm, which Frank was only too delighted to offer, giving the other with great trepidation to her young companion.

"I will do myself the pleasure of seeing you as far as your door."

"Door!—fiddle! You 'll come in, and change your clothes. We can find you something to put on —if you don't mind being dressed like your grandfather. And you 'll dine, and come and see us often

—and rate Joseph for me, I hope; for I really can *not* myself. By the way, I am Lady Harriett Brayle, and this is my dear grandchild, Miss Evershed—quite as good as she looks. What is your name, sir?"

This was rather a startling question. But it might have been answered easily and instantly by the plain truth, only that the Fiend happened to be at Frank's elbow, and tempted him, saying:

"Now here is an opportunity you have been pining for for weeks. These people only know you as a collegian, a gentleman, and their preserver. Who, within twenty miles of Oxford, has not heard the story of mad Cassidy, the Irish tramp, who brought his sons to be educated at the University? If you mention the name of your father, you will be identified at once; and after a little cold civility, those doors, which to you are the gates of Paradise, will be closed for ever against you. Call yourself Frank Gerald. It is your own name, and one you intend to make honourable. There is no lie in suppressing a portion of the truth."

Frank thought that the Fiend reasoned well, and without giving Conscience time to speak on the other side, he answered Lady Harriett's question with,

"My name is Frank Gerald."

The falsehood had been uttered, and Frank was pinned to it. Oh! had he foreseen the writhings and agonies the impalement would cause him!

"A good name. Related to the Irish Geralds?"

"My own family is from Mayo."

"I mean the great Kildare Fitzgeralds, as they are called now."

"Not that I am aware of. If at all, it must be very remotely indeed. My own family is one of no importance."

"Modestly said. In Bell's opinion one family is as good as another. Perhaps she is right. I have a pedigree about eight feet long, and I am positively ashamed to read it—there seems to have been so much hanging, murdering, betraying, and beheading in the blood, that one fears it may be hereditary."

Gossiping in this manner they reached the Hall. Frank was shown into a chamber, and accommodated with an old-fashioned change of clothes—for the two ladies were the sole representatives of their family residing in the manor-house; and a suit in the prevailing mode was beyond the resources of the establishment to supply.

Having completed his extempore toilet, Frank descended to a quiet but elegantly served dinner, which he partook of *tête-à-tête* with his kind hostesses. So much refinement, ease, and graceful abundance, offered the elements of a new world to our collegian; but he felt that it was his legitimate sphere. How to return to the workshop and counting-house after this? As to Miss Bell, she was simply the most

bewitching person he had ever met with. Not that this astonished him. He had been madly in love with her for months. He had seen her first in the University Theatre, among the spectators of a commemoration. He had there learnt she was a young lady of good family, and moreover, of high intellectual cultivation. He had watched her on all possible occasions. The meeting in High Street, on the occasion of his first lecturing Joseph for his negligence, was no more an accident than that which had led to his introduction to the manor-house. But what fairly overwhelmed him was, that Miss Bell should look so favourably upon him, and treat him as an equal, if not as a superior. How, if she knew that he was one of the celebrated "Freshmen," sons of "Cassidy the Irish?"

After dinner the trio adjourned to a comfortable old wainscoted parlour for coffee and conversation. Lady Harriett, wrapped up in numerous shawls, took her accustomed place by the fireside, in a large easy chair. Bell sat on a more modest seat by her grandmother's side. Frank was requested to make himself comfortable on the opposite side of the fireplace.

As Frank was placing his chair he caught a glimpse of a portrait in oil, framed in the oak carving above the chimneypiece, which gave him such a start that he had to employ sundry ingenious gymnastic

exercises in order to retain his equilibrium and that of his chair.

"Whose portrait is that?" he inquired.

"My daughter's," replied the old lady; "that is to say, my only son's dear wife. What is there in it that startles you so?"

"It is the same picture as an engraving—I remember to have seen in my father's bedroom."

"Called 'Juanita,' is it not?"

"It is."

"It is an engraving from that very picture. The impressions of the plate are very scarce. I should like one exceedingly, if I knew where it was to be met with."

"I do not think my father would like to part with the one I speak of. He bought it on account of its extraordinary resemblance to—some one he knew."

"Possibly the original. My poor girl was universally admired. Your father would, doubtless, have met with her in society. She was one of the greatest belles of Dublin."

Poor Frank was very young indeed in the arts of deception. The deceit he had practised on his own account weighed heavily enough on his conscience; but to tell a lie about his father was an achievement of which he felt himself utterly incapable. So he said, amid much blushing and stammering, "No; I am sure that my father did not know the lady. In fact, when he first met with the print, I remember his wondering who the original could have been. The person whom it so strongly resembled, I have every reason to believe was my own mother. I never saw her—she died on the day of my birth, and there are painful associations connected with the subject which have always prevented its discussion in the family."

"May I ask the family name of your mother?" Lady Harriett inquired.

"Her name was Gerald."

"The same as your own?"

Frank blushed, as inexperienced liars will blush, as he replied, "My father and mother were distantly related, I believe."

"Then the resemblance between your mother and Lady Brayle must have been accidental, for my darling girl was of Spanish origin."

Frank Cassidy mused in silence.

CHAPTER X.

WHICH MIGHT AS WELL HAVE BEEN PART OF CHAPTER THE NINTH.

Mr. Frank Cassidy, *alias* Gerald, was at that pitch of happiness which, according to the ancients, was the sure precursor of misfortune. The worldly-wise Egyptian, who cut the acquaintance of King Polycrates on finding that even the fish of the sea were in league with mortals to make that potentate successful in all his undertakings, would certainly have "fought shy" of Master Frank, as our young friend sat, that evening, gossiping by the comfortable fireside of Brayle Manor. He was getting on a great deal too smoothly for the state of things to last. His tongue rattled incessantly. He was astonished to find how much he knew; how fluently he could talk about it; and how highly his discourse was appreciated. He was delighted with everything and everybody, himself included. Next to the joy of being in the presence of his adored one, he was charmed with the

idea of being received, and feeling at his ease, in "good society." Lady Harriett Brayle was the daughter of an Earl and the widow of a Baronet, and Frank appreciated the graces of her ladyship's agreeable manners and lively reminiscences none the less on that account, you may depend upon it. For he had been bred in an atmosphere where the advantages of rank and title are felt to be something more substantial than mere sounding vanities; and he was not one of those tremendous humanitarian philosophers to whom duke and dustman are alike—such as you and I, Tomkins, for instance, who are both notoriously of that way of thinking. *We* wouldn't cringe to a lord—would we? Or even dine with one, if he were to ask us? You may depend upon it they know we wouldn't, and that is the reason why they let us alone.

It may be thought Frank's happiness would have been marred by the reflection that he would so soon have to tear himself away from it, to return to the detested scene of his daily labour. But who spoils a Midsummer holiday by constantly thinking of Black Monday? There were twelve long miles and some long happy hours between Frank and the counting-house. That caused him no uneasiness as yet. Did not conscience trouble him on account of the deception he had practised with regard to his name and origin? I am sorry to say, conscience ceased to do

anything of the kind the moment Frank discovered that he was able to sustain the deceit in question without embarrassment or suspicion. And I fear that, as a rule, the best of us are apt to mistake for the compunctions of conscience what is in reality nothing but the fear of being found out. Mr. Frank Cassidy's happiness, for a good half-hour at least, was unalloyed. Fortune had clearly a blow in store for him.

It soon fell; and it was a crusher when it came. The particular weapon selected by Fortune for its administration was a portrait—not the one over the mantelpiece, but another in the same apartment. It seemed a provision of Destiny that the portraits of Brayle Manor should be fraught with scrape and perplexity to poor Frank Cassidy.

Lady Harriett Brayle, amongst her numerous accomplishments, was a very fair connoisseur of painting; and the manor-house boasted, in addition to a respectable gallery of ancestral portraits, a very notable collection of Morlands, Gainsboroughs, and Wilsons, with a few cabinet specimens of the best Flemish and Italian masters. A selection of these were suspended round the walls of the wainscoted parlour where our little group was assembled. Lights being brought into the room, Lady Harriett—who was very proud of her pictures—directed her visitor's attention to them, inquiring if he were a judge of the art.

Frank Cassidy knew as much about painting as I do about Arabic. But he did not like to confess his ignorance—it is not a pleasant thing to do at any time—and affected to regard the works of art pointed out to him with interest. The Tenierses appeared to him very repulsive, the Rubenses very pink, and the Gainsboroughs very brown. He was dreadfully at a loss what to say, fearing to bestow praise or blame in the wrong place. At last he stopped before a picture, in favour of which he believed he could safely speak, without danger of committing himself.

It was not a happy selection. The work was by no means a masterpiece; but it had been recently painted, and the colours were fresh and vivid—qualities which gave it, at any rate, the merit, to Frank's unpractised eye, of being intelligible. It could not be pronounced original as to subject. It had been exhibited the year previously at Somerset House, when its title in the catalogue had been "Portrait of a Gentleman."

It represented a very fair young man of about Frank's age—a little older, perhaps—in an oratorical attitude, with a roll of paper in his hand; a bust of Pitt and an inkstand on a table behind him; the whole backed by a pillar, red curtain, and thunderstorm, after the custom of the period—not wholly extinct, by the way, in our own.

The words, "That is very fine!" were on Frank's

lips, when they were intercepted by Lady Harriett remarking:

"You needn't look at that. It is a very poor affair, indeed,—the work of a mere novice. But we prize it on account of the likêness."

Frank was glad he had not spoken too precipitately. He faltered out, with some embarrassment:

"Precisely. I am really no judge of painting; but it struck me as being rather—in short—life-like."

"It has some trifling merit in that way. Perhaps you know the original?"

"I do not recollect for the moment——"

"It is Bell's cousin, Mr. Charles Evershed; a very rising young man. I thought you might have met at College."

Frank trembled.

"You forget, grandmamma," Miss Bell interposed, "that my cousin Charles was educated at Cambridge."

("Thank Heaven!" mentally ejaculated our Oxonian.)

"To be sure; how stupid of me!" said the elder lady. "I 'm as bad as the Irishwoman, who told the man she heard was going abroad, to be sure and give her love to her brother Tim, who was abroad too. Yes, that is Mr. Charles Evershed—my grandson, as I suppose I may soon call him."

"I beg your pardon——?"

"Bell and he are engaged to be married. There,

you needn't blush, Bell. An 'approaching marriage in high life,' that has found its way into the *Morning Post* can be no great secret."

Crash! rumble-tumble! whirr! Down came Mr. Frank Cassidy's air-built castle, scattered into a blinding cloud of the earthiest dust.

There was a padlock on Frank's tongue and an immovable weight on his spirits during the remainder of his visit, which, to be sure, was not of much longer duration. At an early hour, he expressed a desire to resume his own costume, and rose from his seat as a preliminary to his departure.

Lady Harriett would have pressed her hospitality on her guest for the night, but Frank pleaded his twelve miles' ride, murmuring some inarticulate excuse about morning studies, reading for a Master's degree, or a scholarship—he scarcely knew what he said, he was so inexperienced a liar. However, it is very certain that he mentioned nothing about an estimate for a bootmaker's shop-front in Cornmarket Street, which he had promised his father to have prepared by ten o'clock on the following morning.

"Well," said Lady Harriett, shaking him kindly by the hand, "if you should again extend your rides in our direction, and if you can put up with the society of such humdrum people as we are, we shall be always glad to see you. I have been a great invalid, and Bell has been my nurse, so that we have seen no

society since her papa's death. Though, to be sure, with the approaching change over Bell's fortunes," (here a sharp dagger appeared to insert itself somewhere between Frank Cassidy's third and fourth ribs), "we shall lead a very different kind of life; and if you will visit us in a few months, you will meet with people of your own station" (Frank hoped not); "very likely some members of your own college." (Heaven forbid! thought our carpenter of arts.) "In the mean time I shall be sincerely obliged to you if you will come and give Joseph a few useful lessons as to what driving really means. It would be useless talking to him to-night, for he has gone to bed raving, and I shall be compelled to take him up his posset with my own hands, or he will never swallow it. Good night, and a thousand, thousand thanks."

Frank's adieux were of the most incoherent description. He scarcely dared look at Miss Bell, much less attempt to take her hand. He bowed himself out of the parlour awkwardly, with a gruesome look at cousin Charles's portrait, which he despised himself for having been ass enough to admire.

A fearful ordeal awaited him in the hall. He had to run the gauntlet of a file of majestic livery servants, drawn up to give him passage, and to stand the searching fire of their eyes. What if there should be an Oxonian amongst them, familiar with the history and representatives of the house of Cassidy?

He need not have been alarmed. They were town gentlemen to a man, and had no suspicion. Frank compromised himself an instant in their estimation, it is true, by giving an unnecessarily large gratuity to be divided amongst them. This smacked somewhat of the plebeian or the parvenu, it must be admitted. But there was a look of "blood" about Frank Cassidy; his clothes were good—not too good—and fitted him faultlessly; his bay mare, or rather Mr. Spavin's, was a very near approach to perfection: these considerations, added to the fearless grace with which our cavalier vaulted into the saddle and galloped out into the darkness, satisfied the severe critics of the shoulder-knot that, after all, they had not to reproach themselves with having wasted their valuable attentions upon a guest not entitled to the honourable distinction of being "the real gentleman."

We will wish Frank Cassidy a pleasant ride home, with a comfortable night's rest after it, and rejoin the ladies in the wainscoted parlour.

"A very delightful young man that," said Lady Harriett Brayle: "a little bookish perhaps; but that is better than your cousin Charles's diplomacy. He is a worthy creature, but his skin always reminds me of parchment, and he never opens his mouth but hot sealing-wax seems to drop from it. There! don't be angry, Bell. I am privileged to make game of your swain, for you know I am really very fond of him."

"I know you are, grandmamma," said Bell, with a deep, long-drawn sigh.

"Mercy on us! What does that mean, child? It seems as much as to say, 'But I'm not, grandmamma.' Is that a correct translation?"

Bell was silent.

"What is the matter with the girl? Surely you are not in love with this Mr. Gerald?"

Lady Harriett Brayle, though a person of very irresolute character, was gifted with very keen perceptions; and in conversation was remarkable for an usually convenient, but sometimes rather awkward, habit of coming directly to the point.

Now between Miss Bell and her grandmamma the most perfect confidence existed. Neither lady had a single secret from the other. So that, instead of being disconcerted by a question, the nature and abruptness of which would have caused most young ladies under similar circumstances to blush and stammer, Miss Bell turned a perfectly serene pair of eyes upon her aged relative, and said, with charming ingenuousness:

"I do not know, grandmamma. But if it should turn out to be so?"

"In that case, I must have the door shut in his face the very next time he presents himself."

"You will do nothing of the kind. You know that perfectly well."

"Of course I do. I couldn't do such a thing to save my life. Save my life, indeed! A man who fished me out of the river like a drowning rat! I foresee it all. He will be coming here constantly; and instead of treating him coldly, as I ought—well, as I ought not, unless I wish to prove myself an ungrateful old wretch—I shall give him a heartier welcome each time; and so will you. He is over head and ears in love already. I could see that by the way his countenance fell when I told him of your engagement. I alluded to it purposely, and was sorry I had done so directly, of course. If you are not in love with him now, you soon will be. I should fall in love with him myself if I were a girl, for he is what I call a MAN. You'll begin to hate your future husband—for you must marry him, you know—and I shall either see you wedded to a life of misery, or else you will sicken and pine, and I shall lose you. A pretty kettle of fish! But I shall attribute it all to Joseph, though of course I shall never have the barbarity to tell him so."

The sincerity of the old lady's grim forebodings, contrasted with the quaint terms in which she expressed them, brought a smile into Bell's pensive face. She rose from her seat and twined her arms round her kinswoman's neck, kissing her affectionately on her wrinkled cheeks and clusters of silver hair, as she said cheerfully:

"You are a very gloomy prophetess, granny; but I don't think a true one. If you should be right in your first surmise, the result may be very different to what you anticipate."

"What, if you fall in love with Mr. Gerald and marry your cousin? Very pretty, indeed!"

"It is not yet settled that I am in love with Mr. Gerald."

"But I tell you you will be, you can't help it. He is the first real man of heart and intellect you have ever met with. Your cousin is a man of principle and duty; he is one of sentiment and courage. The first does right—or tries to do it—because he has read in books that he ought to; the other does it because he can't do otherwise. Look at his eye, his head, and his chin. I am a very good physiognomist. See him on horseback! I watched him ride past our poor, dear old carriage (which I feel for like a human being, and I hope and trust they haven't left it in that horrid cold water all night). It was only the day before yesterday. He seemed a part of the horse, like an Elgin marble. Now your poor dear cousin rides for all the world like a tailor. I have seen him actually hold on by the saddle, with his coat wrinkling up his back in a positively disgraceful manner. The other appeared quite graceful and at his ease in your poor dear grandfather's old-fashioned suit. He was a perfect picture of manly beauty at

the river side when he was dripping wet. The mud positively became him. My gracious! What a lovely pair you would make!"

Bell laughed merrily.

"I don't see anything to laugh at, miss. It is a very serious matter."

"I was laughing to think, that if Mr. Frank Gerald could make love for himself half so well as you have been making it for him——."

"Well, what then?"

"Why, that my cousin Charles might stand a very bad chance indeed."

"Of course—just like me! old fool that I am! always anticipating your wildest wishes. I believe if you were to cry for the moon, I should send for the builder to see if he couldn't run up something on the lawn of a Tower-of-Babel description, in order to try and reach it for you."

There was so much truth couched in the old lady's fantastic hyperbole, that it brought tears of affection into Miss Bell's beautiful eyes. She pressed her grandmother to her bosom, murmuring:

"Dear, dear granny, I believe you would lay down your life to give me a moment's pleasure."

"Then you are very much mistaken, miss," said the elder, with humorous snappishness. "If I thought such a sacrifice would cause you a moment's pleasure, I should be very careful not to make

it. But what are we to do about Mr. Frank Gerald?"

"Never mind him for the present. It is by no means certain that we shall ever see him again."

"He will as certainly come back again, and that soon, as that there will be daybreak in the morning," said the old lady, prophetically; "and the rest will follow."

"Not as you have predicted."

"How then?"

"Grandmamma," said Bell, earnestly, "I will tell you the candid truth. I will not say that I love this Mr. Gerald already. It may be merely gratitude for the service he rendered to us, and the novelty of conversing with a gentleman of such great attainments and pleasing manners. But it is impossible not to feel his immense superiority over my cousin in every respect——"

"Light to darkness!" put in Lady Harriett, sententiously.

"And I will own he has made me feel that I do *not* love my cousin Charles."

"Ah! I knew it."

"And that I can never be happy as his wife."

"Then we are dead women, both—or what is pretty much the same thing."

"No."

"But I say, yes."

"I say no, again. Do you suppose that my cousin Charles, if I were to assure him that my heart can never be his, would hold me to my childish engagement?"

"Most emphatically."

"I think better of him. And that is very inconsistent with the good opinion you have expressed of him."

"My love, I am like yourself. I thought your cousin Charles well enough, till accident threw in my way a young man of his own age, who is worth a thousand of him. Till to-day we had no standard to judge him by in our quiet circle. I am now convinced that he could find plenty of sage maxims and sufficient reasons to justify him in sticking to the bargain of a handsome wife and a snug estate, whether there were any hearts broken in the transaction or not."

"If he only wants my money, he is welcome to it."

"Heyday! and what would Mr. Frank Gerald say to that?"

Bell laughed again.

"You are determined to marry me to Mr. Frank Gerald, I see, whether I will or not. Pray, leave him out of the question. We know nothing of him. Very likely he has other engagements——"

"Fiddle!" ejaculated Lady Harriett, petulantly.

"I am only thinking of my engagement with

Charles, and feel that, for the happiness of both, it must be broken off."

A sudden cloud came over Lady Harriett's kindly face as she said, in an altered and troubled voice:

"My darling, enough of this. I have let my foolish, romantic, old nature run away with me as usual. You forget your promise to your father on his death-bed that you would marry your cousin."

Bell sank despondingly into a seat, resting her forehead on her hand.

"True," she said, dejectedly, "I *had* forgotten."

"And the importance he attached to its fulfilment?"

"Yes. That by doing so I should rescue his name from dishonour. What could he have meant?"

"That I am unable to tell you. Your father—though a good man originally, and a kind husband to my darling girl—was weak and extravagant. By some means—Heaven knows what!—he placed himself in the power of his detestable brother. It was, no doubt, to conciliate him he exacted the promise."

Bell's face suddenly brightened as with a hopeful inspiration.

"But that bad man," she said, "Charles's father—I will not call him uncle—you tell me has committed a dreadful crime, and dares not appear in England. What can we have to fear from him?"

"There is always much to fear from the vin-

dictiveness of the wicked, my child. I wish your poor father had been more explicit as to the peril we had to meet. But death closed his lips too early."

"I have often asked Charles," the young girl said, musingly, "if he knew what hold his father had upon mine. He has always declared he was as much in the dark as I was, but that he knew his own father to be capable of any baseness. You know he offered to release me from my engagement when his father's disgrace was made public."

"A pity you did not accept the offer."

"I could not, at such a time and for such a reason. Besides, it seemed such a trait of nobleness in him that I felt as if I really loved him at the time. The tie was knit closer. He seemed to rejoice so—oh! he must love me—and I will marry him, grandmamma."

"My darling!"

"You can never be firm; I must be firm for both of us."

"What will you do?"

"We must forbid Mr. Gerald the house—as rudely and as ungraciously as possible. I must never see him again."

"You love him, then?"

Bell buried her face in her grandmother's bosom, and sobbed, "Did he not preserve your life to me?"

The two women hugged each other during a long

silence, only broken by their mutual sobbings. At length the elder wiped her eyes, and said with an effort:

"Then I will be firm, too, Bell, for once. I will not be so unjust as to close my doors to the man whom you love till I find him unworthy to enter them."

"But my engagement——?"

"It shall be broken off at all hazards."

"My father's honour——?"

"He should have taken care of it in his lifetime. There! I'm exhausted, Bell, and all abroad. You must be the same. The best thing you can do is to get to bed, and say some very long prayers first. I'm not used to making efforts, and I've made a great one this evening. Kiss me, and good night."

Bell kissed her grandmother many times over, returning several times from the door to repeat the operation. At the last repetition the old lady placed her hands on her granddaughter's head, and looking upward said, in a solemn but not unhopeful voice:

"God preserve thee from wasting!—the one priceless pearl left on the poor old woman's broken string!"

Bell went to bed—to dream, possibly, of her cousin Charles, but more probably of Mr. Frank Gerald. The conduct of Lady Harriett Brayle, when left alone in the wainscoted parlour, was as follows:

First of all, she sat with her feet on the fender, with her brocade skirts tucked up in a very unbecoming manner, and occupied herself for some minutes in polishing her spectacles. Then she raked out the fire with great circumspection. This accomplished, she opened a sideboard drawer, from whence she brought out an old silk handkerchief, with which she proceeded to dust her favourite pictures, a duty her ladyship imposed upon herself twice a-day. Her first care was for the portrait of the Spanish-looking lady over the mantelpiece, which had excited such a sensation in the mind of Frank Cassidy, and which she could only reach by standing on a chair. Having wiped the canvas carefully and reverently, the old lady bent forward and kissed it, murmuring:

"My poor boy's good angel! who could not save him, but who died for him! Bless thee in thy place in heaven!"

After this achievement the gold-rimmed spectacles required a little more polishing. Her ladyship then descended from her elevated position, and proceeded to bestow her attention upon the Rubenses, Tenierses, Wilsons, and Gainsboroughs. The portrait of the Right Honourable Charles Evershed, Assistant-Under-Deputy-Secretary of State for the Something-or-Other Department, she left to the last. When she came to that *chef-d'œuvre* her ladyship hesitated. There was nobody looking; she could not resist the temptation

of forgetting herself, to a certain extent, in her capacity of peer's daughter and baronet's widow, and remembering only that she was an exasperated old woman. So she shook her fist angrily at the portrait, and muttered between her teeth :

"You paper-faced nonentity! I wish to Heaven they would send you somewhere to do your diplomacy where there is a nice hot climate and plenty of can-

nibals with good appetites. God forgive me for a wicked old woman!"

Lady Harriett, alarmed at her own truculency, hurried out of the room to administer consolation to the prostrate Joseph in the form of posset.

I must hurry these retrospective chapters to a close, in order to resume the main thread of my narrative. It turned out much as the sharp-sighted old dowager had foretold. On the second day after his first visit Mr. Frank Gerald reappeared at the manor-house, handsomer, better dressed, more radiant, more engaging than at first. He repeated his visits frequently, at very short intervals. The colour forsook poor Bell's once ruddy cheeks, and her bright eyes grew dim. The periodical correspondence with her betrothed, once a pleasant duty to her, as her only means of communication with the busy world, became a hateful formality. She loved Frank Cassidy with all the passion of a generous impulsive nature, even as Frank loved her. Their interviews always took place in the presence of Lady Harriett, so that no expression of their mutual sentiments was interchanged between them. Each visit, Frank Cassidy vowed, should be his last; but it was the old story of the moth and the candle—he could not keep away. Each meeting between the three friends was sadder than the preceding, for no one suffered more

from the existing state of things than poor Lady Harriett. Her keen perceptions told her the whole truth, and foreshadowed its inevitable consequences; but the irresolution of her nature forbade her striking out a determined line of action. Should she forbid Mr. Frank Gerald the house? She could not be guilty of such injustice and ingratitude. Should she expostulate with him, lay the whole case before him, and appeal to his good sense and feeling as to the course he ought to pursue? The result of such a proceeding she foresaw at once—it would be the last they would see of Mr. Frank Gerald. And the kind old lady clung fondly to the hopeful side of the romance. She still strove to believe in the interposition of some favourable circumstance, like the fairy in a pantomime, to bring the two lovers together; and she had not the courage to give Harlequin his *congé*. One important step she considered it her duty to take. That was to write to the lukewarm diplomatist, Mr. Charles Evershed, to inform him exactly how matters stood, and to urge the policy of his taking a little more pains for the securing of his prize, unless he wished to see it wrested from him. This letter was dispatched to the neighbouring post-town, to the great satisfaction of Lady Harriett, who felt at least a portion of a weighty load transferred from her own shoulders to those of another. But it had scarcely travelled half-

a-mile towards its destination when a large official-looking epistle, on blue-wove paper, stamped with the huge seal of the Whatever-it-was Office, made its formidable appearance in the manor-house, conveying to Miss Bell the thrilling intelligence that her betrothed had been visited with the singular good fortune—at which the young lady was evidently intended to rejoice immensely—of being appointed to some trumpery service in the Lombardo-Venetian States—connected with that diplomacy so heartily despised by Lady Harriett, which would necessitate the writer's immediate departure and absence from England for some months.

"Let him go, and a good riddance!" said Lady Harriett. "I only hope he'll tumble over the Bridge of Sighs into the Rialto, or whatever they call it. He's dreadfully near-sighted, and I'll stake my life he doesn't know how to swim. Or if he should escape drowning, I hope Providence will induce the Bravo of Venice, or the Council of Ten, or the Inquisition, or some of those people, to take him in hand—only I'm afraid he's too insignificant."

Poor Bell was too weak and languid to smile at her grandmother's absurdities. Besides, young ladies, it is not pleasant to feel one's self slighted, even by a lover we *don't* particularly care about—is it?

"It is a clear proof that he cares very little for

me, at any rate," said Bell; "and it quite reconciles me to breaking off my engagement with him, if I thought I could do so consistently with my promise to my poor father."

"You needn't trouble yourself. I consider that Mr. Charles has taken the initiative. You have evidently a formidable rival in Madame Diplomacy. Much good may she do him! I am heartily glad he has gone. We will take advantage of his absence to bring back some of those roses to your cheeks. I shall make formal proposals to Frank to-morrow."

(Our young friend had got on, you see. He was already promoted to the familiar dignity of "Frank.")

"You may not have the opportunity," said Bell, shaking her head sadly. "He has not been near us for three days."

"Which clearly proves he cannot stay away from *us* a day longer. He will be here in the morning. He is as mopy as an owl himself, and not half the man he was a month ago. Good people are scarce, and I can't afford to lose either of you. I shall anticipate leap-year, and pop the question."

Bell could not help laughing at this pleasantry. It was a delighted but rather an hysterical laugh, and she continued it for some minutes, sobbing and burying her curls in her grandmother's bosom.

The roses began to bud on Miss Bell's cheeks that very evening. Only to be nipped by a sharp frost,

though! No Mr. Gerald made his appearance on the following day. Nor on the next, or the next to that. On the fourth day Lady Harriett received a letter from Frank, stating that, after much indecision and mental agony, he had yielded to the dictates of duty, and decided on tearing himself from the fascinations of her granddaughter's society. The letter was very passionate, full of prayers for the happiness of both ladies, gratitude for their kindness to the writer, and protestations of undying love towards the younger. They were assured that they would never see Frank Gerald again, but possibly might hear of him. He had withdrawn his name from the books of his college, and proposed entering upon a remote and entirely new sphere of action, &c. &c. &c.

"There 's a pretty kettle of fish!" said Lady Harriett, employing a favourite idiom. "Gone back to Ireland, no doubt, where his friends will marry him to a red-headed, fox-hunting woman, in a brogue and a riding-habit! Mercy on us!"

Bell smiled through her tears, and solaced the old lady with her usual remedies of embracing and kissing.

It was sad news for the moment, but cheering in prospective. Frank loved her—that was sufficient. Miss Bell's organ of self-esteem was pretty well developed, and she feared no rival, Irish or English. She also possessed the bump of Hope in great pro-

minence; and the future seemed bright to her. So the roses began to bud again—slowly, but this time with more enduring prospects.

Frank had quarrelled with his father. Brayle Manor had proved a death-blow to the workshop. Frank neglected his duties, and it was a busy season. He had far too much to say to his tailor, hatter, and bootmaker. Mr. Spavin's spanking bay was brought round to the door too often, and at unseasonable hours. Frank was no longer master of his own head for those calculations and arrangements that had earned his father's tolerance. The crowning difficulty was the discovery that Miles Cassidy had proposed, as an agreeable surprise for his son, the removal of his business to A——. This our old friend had calculated would be exactly in accordance with Frank's wishes, and he counted on great exertions on the part of the latter, as a recompense for the sacrifices the removal had cost him. Nothing could have been more unfortunately conceived. There was some possibility of concealment in the comparatively populous Oxford. But in the little gossiping town of A——, four miles nearer to Brayle Manor, to which it was the most proximate post-town, the carpenter's son would be detected in a day. Frank could not bear to contemplate it. He quarrelled with his father for forcing him to plebeian occupations; he quarrelled with Ted for getting tipsy; with Biddy for smelling of paint,

and inking her fingers; with Jimmy, for not having the wits, which he had never possessed, about him. Briefly, he ran away, to bury himself in London.

It was not quite so mad a course, as such a proceeding would be on the part of a young man similarly situated in the present day. Education was not so cheap then as it is now. Literary labour was better paid for; and Frank, in a quiet way, had already earned a few acceptable pounds, by contributing to the periodicals. He wrote well, and tersely. He had a few valuables in his possession, sufficient to enable him to live for some months, for he had scarcely an atom of sensuality in his composition, and he had been trained to a life of extreme frugality. By correcting Greek proofs for the printers alone (having been fortunate enough to secure good introductions in the right quarters), he was enabled to provide for the primary necessities of his existence—namely, the external appearance of a gentleman.

Of course, Frank magnanimously pretended to himself that he would never see Miss Evershed again. Also, as a matter of course, he secretly, and without confessing it to himself, entertained the project of marrying her some day. He was no great things of a politician; but he remembered that Miss Evershed (who, contrary to the practice observed by parents and guardians in those days, had been permitted by

her indulgent grandmother to read the newspapers; and, indeed, whatever she liked) was a stanch partisan of Queen Caroline. So he wrote *Anne Boleyn*, believing that he did it in the interests of the Queen and of abstract justice. It was really because he hoped Miss Evershed would read and admire the poem. Miss Evershed did both.

Soon after the publication of that memorable but not particularly-well-remembered work, Miss Evershed attained her majority. Matters of business brought her with Lady Harriett to London. It was a very surprising matter, to be sure, that they should have met Mr. Frank Gerald riding in Hyde Park on a grey mare, nearly as faultless as Mr. Spavin's historic bay (for the use of which, by-the-by, Mr. Frank had left a tolerably extensive bill owing).

The intimacy was renewed. Frank speedily became an *habitué* of the Charles-the-Second house in Kensington, already alluded to. Lady Harriett's health was failing. She had experienced a relapse of a chronic disease of the heart, which at her time of life was dangerous. She was anxious to see her darling well provided for. Money gave her no uneasiness, for Bell's fortune was ample. The old lady's good opinion of Frank had been enhanced: firstly, by his self-negation in tearing himself from Bell's society; secondly, by his increasing fame as a writer, which the Lady Harriett in her ardent nature

hugely exaggerated. She fulfilled her threat one day (only that leap-year had already arrived), and actually offered her granddaughter's hand to Frank Cassidy.

Frank was overwhelmed. He said it was too great honour and happiness for him to aspire to. Lady Harriett, in her idiomatic fashion, said "Fiddle!" respecting Frank all the more on account of his modesty. Frank protested that his family was obscure; that he had no means of livelihood, but what he derived from his pen. "Modesty again!" thought Lady Harriett. Her ladyship had never wanted for a thousand pounds in her life, and when she heard a man whom she knew to be a graduate of Oxford, and whom she saw always well dressed and riding upon good horses, talk about poverty, she thought, of course (if she thought at all on the subject), that he merely meant his private resources were confined to perhaps a few hundreds a-year.

Frank and Miss Evershed were engaged—Cousin Charles having officially renounced his claim. Frank would only accept his proffered happiness on the condition of three years elapsing; so that he might have time to make a name for himself worthy of bestowing on his betrothed. He also stipulated vigorously that the whole of Miss Evershed's property should be settled upon herself.

"What a sublime, magnanimous creature he is!" said both ladies.

Was that Mr. Frank Gerald's opinion of himself? I am afraid not, though he certainly tried to make it so. He found a great deal to say in his own favour. "I have told them," he argued, "that my family is an obscure one; that I am without private means; that I will not exact the fulfilment of her promise, if in three years she finds me unworthy of it. By that time, I hope I shall be a great man. They both declare their contempt for the empty claims of birth and title. I have employed no essential deception."

But had Mr. Frank Gerald informed Lady Harriett Brayle and Miss Isabel Evershed that his real name, as far as he knew, was Cassidy; and that his father was a hard-working carpenter, who had entered Oxford as an Irish tramp holding a little boy by each hand, and carrying a huge bundle slung on to a shillelah over his shoulder? Well, no! Frank had not yet found an opportunity for making this important revelation. But he always intended to make it, next Monday—that day so propitious to good resolutions, on which I intend to leave off smoking, and to commence my great five-act tragedy —the day, in fact, which never comes!

Such was the *status quo ante bellum* in which Mr. Frank Cassidy got his head broken. With regard to that memorable encounter, one circumstance only

requires explanation in this place; namely, the presence of Miles and Edward Cassidy on the field of battle. The father and son, as has been shown, had come up to London in search of the lost sheep. They had applied at once to the publisher of Frank's book, by whom they had been referred to a daily newspaper on which he had constant employment. Here they learnt Mr. Gerald was to be found at a certain house in Kensington, where he had ordered all letters and applications to be forwarded to him. Poor Frank! Either he was very unsophisticated, or he could not have owed much money! Literary men are more circumspect now-a-days, as the reader will probably find if he applies for an address at a newspaper office.

CHAPTER XI.

THE PRODIGAL FATHER.

About five minutes after Miles Cassidy had slammed the door of the ugly red-brick house in Kensington angrily behind him, a very elaborate flourishing knock at the same portal resounded through the establishment.

One of the stalwart footmen opened the door, and gave entrance to a very elegantly dressed gentleman in a horseman's cloak. He passed contemptuously, and without speaking, by the man-servant, who would have held the door open for a parley, into the entrance-hall; drew off his faultless gloves in a leisurely manner, and proceeded to remove his outer garment, which he threw at the footman with a lordly nonchalance—overwhelming that official, morally as well as physically.

"Sir Paul Evershed," said the visitor, turning his back on the footman, and walking coolly into the parlour, just vacated by Miles and Edward Cassidy.

"My lady is confined to her bed, Sir Paul," said the footman, following him obsequiously into the room.

"Dear me! I am pained beyond measure. Not seriously indisposed, I trust?"

"A bad return of her old complaint, Sir Paul."

"Bless my soul! how very distressing, to be sure! Is Miss Evershed within?"

"She is, Sir Paul. But there 's been a gentleman badly hurt, and she and Mrs. Barton are attending of him."

"A gentleman hurt! dear me! Can I be of any service?"

"Well, Sir Paul, I believe he's all right—comparative, and there's a doctor along with him."

"Then I might possibly be in the way. Besides, my time is precious. Send my son to me, I understand he is here."

"Mr. Charles, Sir Paul?"

"Mr. Charles, of course. I have no other son. Inform him I am here."

"Directly, Sir Paul. Would you like to step up to the drawing-room? There's company."

"No: obey my instructions, if you please."

"Yes, Sir Paul."

"Here, come back, my good fellow."

"Yes, Sir Paul."

"I will take lunch in this apartment."

"What would you like, Sir Paul?"

"Game and a salad, with some hock, iced."

"Directly, Sir Paul."

"Now, that's what I call the real gentleman," soliloquised the departing flunky with great admiration. He had never been so magnificently ordered about in his life.

Sir Paul Evershed left alone, proceeded to arrange his whiskers, which were of the *côtelette de mouton* pattern then in vogue, extending only from the ear to the cheek-bone, leaving the lower part of the face

bare, at a mirror with an elegantly inlaid pocket-comb of choice tortoiseshell. This important operation accomplished, the baronet disposed of himself in a graceful attitude in the easiest chair in the room, and proceeded to pare and trim his nails with great assiduity and circumspection, using a penknife for the purpose that evidently belonged to the same costly toilette case as the comb.

While Sir Paul is thus profitably occupied, we may take the opportunity of studying his personal appearance.

At the first glance you would have taken him for a man of certainly not more than thirty. He had a smooth skin and a brilliant complexion; so much so, that you might have suspected its tints had been heightened by artificial means, which was not the case. He had a profusion of curling dark brown hair, in the arrangement of which art *had* been employed, and that with great elaboration. It was lightly sprinkled with powder, though the abominable fashion was already on the wane. This, to a reasoning observer, noticing that the general *tenue* of the wearer was in accordance with the latest mode, would have awakened the first suspicion that Sir Paul Evershed was an older man than he wished to appear. Sir Paul had, in fact, only recently adopted powder as a concealment of a few grey hairs that had impertinently shown themselves among the prevailing

chestnut. A close inspection of the face, if you could only have got at it, for it was a shifting, scrutiny-avoiding face, would have shown you a few finely-traced crow's-feet about the eyes. But even if you could have seized Sir Paul Evershed by both ears, and dragged his head into the glare of the brightest sunlight, you would have seen no physical reason to believe he had attained to within ten years of his real age, which was forty-seven. His forehead was high, narrow, and as white and smooth as marble. His nose was thin and slightly hooked. His mouth, decorated by the then unusual and rather suspicious ornament of a moustache, was only a little too large for classic regularity, and his lips were loose and rounded. When they smiled they disclosed a set of large, regular teeth, of dazzling whiteness. And Sir Paul was perpetually smiling—perhaps in order to display his dental treasures. If so, it was a serious error of judgment on his part, for his smile was positively hideous. His eyes were tolerably large, and apparently of a light colour; but it was difficult to fix them long enough to pronounce judgment on their exact tint. The baronet possessed faultless white hands, which he admired, and tended as if they were choice works of art (as in one sense, perhaps, they were), and which he considered worthy the honour of being set in costly, but not too profuse jewellery.

The lunch made its appearance before Mr. Charles was forthcoming. The grounds at the back of the house were of considerable extent, and the diplomatist had flown to their remotest corner, in the hopes of concealment from a visitor who was not easily to be shunned.

"Mr. Charles gone for a walk in the grounds, Sir Paul: sent to fetch him: here directly, Sir Paul," said the footman, arranging the viands.

"Very good. You can leave the room."

Sir Paul proceeded to dispose of a cold grouse very deliberately, taking great pains with his mastication, and sunning himself agreeably in the daylight refracted through the amber wine, before every sip of his chosen beverage.

"Charley's a long time coming," said Sir Paul, smiling to himself for practice. "Want of filial tenderness, I am afraid. Ha! ha! Bless him! Health and prosperity to him, for I really can't spare the darling boy."

In a few seconds the diplomatist burst into the room, his usually pale face now livid with shame and anger.

"Ha, Charley, my dear boy; glad to see you," said the elder (who looked the junior), in easy light comedy tones, extending his jewelled hand to his offspring, but looking at his wine-glass as he spoke. "Why, you don't shake hands! Not that I care

much about that; yours, I remember, are apt to be dusty, and sometimes inky. Besides, there is a proverb about having too much of a good thing, and your extensive paw is a difficulty really beyond my grasp. Ha! ha!"

Sir Paul drew out his penknife and trimmed the nails of his own hand, which he regarded as with affectionate congratulation on its lucky escape from contamination.

"I will never touch the hand of a felon, were he ten times my father," said the diplomatist, with a scowling brow.

"Mock heroics, Charley," said his father, with a playful laugh. "Take my advice—don't. They don't become you. It's a sort of thing that requires a sonorous voice, and a good flashing pair of eyes. Now, your organ—excuse me, my dear fellow—is an indifferent parody on a penny trumpet, while the pink eyelids and spectacles mar the intended effect deplorably! Give it up. Sit down and have some hock."

"How dare you show yourself in this house?" said the son, not noticing the invitation.

"Dare, my good fellow! Don't use that word to me. I dare a great many things beyond the conception of a man of your calibre."

"But you are liable to arrest and a felon's doom at a moment's notice."

Sir Paul Evershed raised his eyebrows in well-feigned astonishment. "I!" he exclaimed. "What strange hallucination is the boy labouring under? There is something in one of the old dramatists, to the effect that fools are not madmen. I begin to think the two characters are reconcilable."

"Are you not a self-confessed, if not a legally-convicted bigamist?"

Sir Paul laughed, with a very successful assumption of heartiness. "What!" he said. "Were you really ass enough to be taken in by that trumped-up story?"

"Trumped-up story, forsooth! The facts were glaring enough; especially one that I have good reason to remember in connection with it,—namely, that I nearly ruined myself in purse and credit to supply you with means to fly the country."

"That was one of my little devices of paternal discipline, my affectionate child. You had behaved towards me in a very unfilial manner. When I punish my inferiors and dependents, I make a point never to waste physical exertion, but always try to find out where the greatest amount of pain can be inflicted with the least trouble. You will remember that, perhaps, in my treatment of you as a child. Now, knowing your respectability was your sensitive point, and wishing to appeal to your tenderest feelings, I took advantage of the foolish and eminently untenable

revengeful plot of a woman, to whom I will not deny I had done what is called an injury. But we have all been young. I beg your pardon; *you* never were."

"Do you mean to say that your second marriage was a false one?"

"Ha! ha! that raises my opinion of you. I see you have no objection to criminality in the abstract, so that it does not bring one within the pale of the law. My good fellow, the misguided creature who threatened me with prosecution is comfortably silenced. I have her written declaration of penitence and retraction, attested by credible witnesses, to the effect that I had never contracted a legal marriage with her."

"Why have you been keeping out of the way so long, then?"

"For my own pleasure, sir! the reason which has induced me to come back—*in* the way, as I suppose I may be considered. My baggage is at Long's Hotel. The address is no secret. I have left cards with the most influential of my acquaintance. I am open to any public investigation of my conduct, which I am anxious to court rather than avoid. And perhaps it would be as well, as a preliminary to your marriage with your cousin; which, by the way, it is high time was concluded. In fact, *pour faire part à vos noces, mon cher,* is my principal motive for coming to England."

"My engagement with my cousin is broken off," said Charles, gloomily.

All the "light comedy" disappeared from Sir Paul Evershed's face, as by magic. He looked the very incarnation of terrified evil as he croaked in a husky voice: "What?"

"I have formally renounced all claim to my cousin's hand."

"And her fortune?"

"Everything."

"You cursed fool—why?"

"Because she gave me to understand the marriage would be against her inclination."

Sir Paul ran his jewelled fingers through his powdered ringlets as he murmured, in desperate tones:

"Who could have believed it? Even a grain of romance to lurk under that parchment skin! No! it is impossible! You cannot have been such an idiot. If you have resigned your cousin's hand, it must be that you have cast your eyes elsewhere."

"I have. What then?"

"Who is it?"

"The youngest daughter of the head of my department."

"Rich?"

"Moderately; and that only in prospective."

"Are you accepted?"

"No; but I am in love."

"You have been abroad, employed on secret service; have you made any money?"

"Not a penny."

"Saved anything?"

"I am in debt. My salary barely suffices to support me."

"Can you by any possibility raise twelve thousand pounds by the end of the year?"

"Not to save my soul."

"Then, by G—, I am a ruined man, and so are you."

"What have you done?"

"That is a business-like question. I will tell you. The story of the bigamy was true—arising from an error of calculation on my part. You know I calculate all my schemes with mathematical precision. But as in astronomy, if your instrument happens to be the sixteenth of an inch wrong, it may lead you billions of miles away from the truth in your result, so it was with my premises. I thought detection an impossibility. The woman, however, found me out, and pursued me. I set a handsome young Frenchman on to her, who won her affections; but I had to bribe him horribly. An attachment grew up between them. An opportunity for emigration to South America presented itself, and she offered to give me the written confession of conspiracy I told you of, on payment of

a certain sum to enable them to travel comfortably. It was their ultimatum. I agreed to their terms; but I had lost at play, though I am generally successful in my calculations of the chances, and I had to forge a bill of exchange to raise the money."

"Which felony you expect me to compound for?"

"Or see me hanged, whichever you like."

"It is not a matter of choice—the amount?"

"The original amount is a mere trifle—a thousand pounds. I had made my arrangements for meeting it, only that it happened to get into the hands of a vindictive scoundrel, who has a *vendetta* against me."

"Who is that?"

"A fellow who was my valet for years—a Sardinian rascal."

"What injury had you done him?"

"None really. The fellow was an ugly cripple, and took it into his head to marry a young and handsome wife. A man cannot help his personal attractions, and——but these things must be Hebrew to a person of your lymphatic temperament. But the rascal imposed upon me so abominably. If he had come upon me with a stiletto it would have been *selon les règles*, and I might have been prepared for the worst. But he seemed resigned to his fate, blamed his wife only for her levity of conduct, sent her home to her friends, and made no offer to quit

my service. The rascal had saved money, and only remained with me in order to get me in his power. He had profited too well by my lessons. He had learnt my art of hitting a man in his weakest place. He knew that money—money—money—was my weak point, as it has been ever since I was a penniless younger son in a public school. He found out about the forgery, got the bill into his possession, and has bled me recklessly ever since with it. Whenever things begin to go smoothly with me, that villain makes his appearance with a fresh claim. I had a forlorn hope of getting rid of him this morning, but it proved fallacious."

"How so?"

"As I was about to knock at this door I caught a glimpse of his evil countenance—in pursuit of me, no doubt—among the yelping crowd. A happy inspiration reminded me that Italians were unpopular with the mob. I whispered to a few ruffians that he was one of the witnesses against the Queen, emphasising the hint with a crown-piece here and there. It was a mere speculation. A stray brickbat might have disposed of him. I built no great hopes on it, and am not seriously disappointed."

"Would you have seen the man murdered?"

"With the greatest pleasure."

"I will have nothing further to say to you. You shall take the consequences of your own villany."

"Which you will have the kindness to share with me, my son. To see me hanged would no doubt afford you the liveliest satisfaction, as a personal matter; but how would it affect your prospects in the Coal-Scuttle and Boot-Jack department, or whatever it may be, and as the *prétendu* of his lordship's youngest daughter?"

Charles bit his lip.

"What can be done?" he inquired.

"Why the fellow—who is as avaricious as he is vindictive—has at length proposed definite terms; only, I believe, because he thinks me incapable of fulfilling them. It appears he has a mother and sisters, to whom he professes to be attached. He also boasts of belonging to a princely family. Their ancestral estate near Genoa is for sale. He wants to buy it. The price is twelve thousand pounds."

"For this he will release you?"

"Give up the bill."

"If not?"

"Give up me."

"What can I do?"

"If you had not been ass enough to cancel your engagement with your cousin, you might have simply married her, and raised money on the estate, which would have been yours according to her father's wish —I took care of that."

"But the engagement *is* cancelled; and Bell is

engaged to be married to another gentleman, who is now in this house."

"Who is he?"

"A Mr. Gerald—an author."

"Do you know anything of him?"

"Very little; it is a romantic attachment."

"Then we must either demolish Mr. Gerald and reinstate you in your former position, or else we must work upon the feelings of Miss Bell by disclosing to her a certain secret, in the preservation of which you have been my accomplice, with all your Roman virtues, Master Charles."

"You would gain little by that. If you were to apprise my cousin that——"

"That the comfortable estate she enjoys does not really belong to her?"

"She would resign it at once to the rightful owner. As I would long ago have compelled her to do, had I but known where that owner was to be found."

"Just so, my son. But fearing the ebullition of one of those lukewarm spurts of disinterestedness which you have just manifested, I have had the sagacity to keep that secret to myself. It has not been bad capital, all things considered; and there is meat on its bones yet. But come, as this appears a *jour de fête* here, and as my arrival has been already made public, we had better join the folks in the drawing-

room. We can resume business in the morning. Take my arm. It will look better."

"You infernal villain, I will not touch you!" said the diplomatist, recoiling.

"As you please," said his father, looking, for once, fixedly at him, with an ugly frown on his brow, and an uglier smile on his lips.

"Charley, do you know you grow more like your poor mother every day? And you know how I loved *her*. Do you remember knocking me down one day for maltreating her, as you called it?"

"Would that all the acts of my life had been as righteous! I remember it well."

"So do I, my dear boy. Let us go to the drawing-room. Pray observe the *convenances*. Take my arm."

Charles Evershed took his father's arm, and accompanied him to the drawing-room.

CHAPTER XII.

HOME AGAIN.

How many volumes have been written, and will yet be written, on the simple text, "Extremes meet,"—on the approximations of the remote, on the likenesses of the unlike! Be under no apprehensions, reader: *I* have no intention of being voluminous on the fascinating paradox. I shall only touch upon it briefly, and in fact would not have noticed it at all, but that—— I will tell you the reason presently. What startling points of resemblance may be discovered between the summits and the abysses of the social system; nay, between man and the very lowest tribes of the brute creation! For instance, I am on intimate terms with a half-bred poodle—a quadruped of sluggish intellect and impenetrable affections, who is wonderfully like the portraits of Shakspeare, and who has been named after the immortal bard for that reason. We have our vegetables and fire-wood from a living likeness of Julius Cæsar, who can scarcely

calculate the change of a shilling accurately, and whose wife beats him cruelly. Liston, the celebrated actor, whose ugliness was half his fortune, was at the same time renowned for his resemblance to the undeniably handsome King George the Fourth. An illustrious neighbour and ally of ours—for the rest, a much better-looking man than his caricaturists would lead you to believe—can by no device of imperial splendour, martial pomp, or faultless Parisian tailoring, divest himself of the outward aspect of a London betting-house keeper. I remember seeing a pretty, effeminate little dandy at a picture exhibition, whom I heard make some sensible remarks on the paintings. He turned out to be an eminent prizefighter. A few days ago, I was shown a brawny, ill-dressed, ill-tempered-looking man, who might have been a dog-stealer, but who proved to be one of the most refined and accomplished poets of the day.

I remember —— But I will return to the subject by-and-by, and, in the mean time, get on with my story.

Our act-drop last fell upon a London interior. It rises again to disclose the familiar street in A——, with Miles Cassidy's abode in the foreground. Time, afternoon. A lapse of one month is supposed to have occurred between the acts.

A low whistle is heard. Enter a dirty, ill-dressed, bullet-headed young man, who comes shambling

stealthily along by the wall, as far as the angle of the courtyard, into which he peeps hurriedly, shrinking back again as if to avoid observation from within.

You will find the young man's portrait below. (I don't think much of the artist's powers of execution; but he is at any rate laborious, and a certain readiness with which he usually seizes my conception

of a character induces me to go on employing him.) While you are looking at the picture, I may as well take the opportunity of putting you out of suspense as to the application of my abruptly-terminated remarks on the "like and unlike" question.

The last figure I had occasion to sketch was that of the elegant, the accomplished, the faultlessly-attired Sir Paul Evershed—"Handsome Evershed," as he had been flatteringly christened from his twentieth year, or "Gentleman Evershed," as he was sometimes called by a certain class of his admirers. By the way, whenever you hear of a man being *nicknamed* for the possession of a grace or a virtue, as a rule, you may make up your mind that it doesn't belong to him: the graces and the virtues are symmetrical, unobtrusive, retiring; it is only their coarse, overloaded counterfeits that attract notice. If I hear of Handsome So-and-so, I generally expect to meet an ill-looking fellow, with merely some glaring ornament of eyes, whiskers, teeth, or complexion, that attracts the admiration of the tasteless; and am seldom disappointed. The notoriously charitable Mr. What's-his-name will usually prove to be a man who cannot give a sixpence till he has first collected a large crowd about him; and then, having handed the coin round for inspection, will spin it up high in the air, that it may fall on the pavement with the loudest possible ring. I have heard of a man in a country town who

was actually called *Honest* Such-a-one; if I had ever come in contact with that man, I should have looked pretty sharply after my pockets. But to the question. As I am fond of contrast, I thought my next full-length should be a character of the most opposite description, and, having the bullet-headed young man in reserve, I conceived it a favourable opportunity for bringing him forward with effect. Judge of my astonishment, after a few preliminary sittings from my new model, to find that the two personages brought into juxtaposition did not contrast at all; but that the shambling, ill-favoured, uncleanly, area-sneak-looking proprietor of the bullet-head, and the elegant, white-handed, *spirituel* baronet, were in reality, when you came to compare them closely, very much like one another.

You do not recognise the likeness at present? When you know a little more of the young man's antecedents and principles, and see a little more of the baronet's doings, it may begin to dawn upon you.

The young man's signal is not answered at first. He repeats it a little louder, after an interval not very patiently borne, to judge by the increasing scowl of his hang-dog countenance. Still the whistle is unanswered. He exchanges his mode of signal for the peculiar gurgling cry, technically known to street populations as the "Chy-ike!" This also has to be

repeated two or three times, and the young man begins to look very angry indeed at the liberty somebody is taking in not attending to him.

At length, a wan, haggard, prematurely-old woman, shabbily attired, but with some attempts at neatness and gentility, in a painful state of alarm and trepidation, comes out of Miles Cassidy's parlour, glances round her like a frightened hare, drags the young man into the shadow of the courtyard, covers his villanous countenance with affectionate kisses, and addresses him as "My own Sammy."

"Well, that 'll do," her own Sammy observes, putting her aside with great loftiness of manner. "You 've been a precious while coming! Didn't you hear me?"

"I did, my darling; but I couldn't slip out earlier. Mr. Pyebush is taking his Greek lesson."

"Well, he ain't a taking it from you, I 'spose."

"Samuel, you know the terms of my engagement with our revered benefactor."

"Revered benefactor be blowed!" interposes Samuel wrathfully. "Let 's have no more of that cant. What 's he ever done for ME?"

(*Now* do you begin to see a glimmer of resemblance between Mr. Samuel Quelch of Oxford and Sir Paul Evershed? Not yet? It will be more perceptible presently.)

"Oh, Samuel! after the many, many times he has tried——"

"Well, he couldn't have tried very hard; or, if he's such a precious clever fellow as you make him out, he'd have done it at last. What did I ever get from him but hard words, and hard living, and hard *work?*"

The tones of Samuel became very bitter indeed as he mentioned the last outrageous imposition.

"I've been obliged to work hard all my life, Samuel."

"Oh, indeed! That's news, that is. I thought you was brought up a lady. I thought, 'cos you was a delicate child, you had everything as was wanted to make you grow up strong—eggs and chicking broth, and calves'-foot jelly and stout, and oranges cut in half with powdered white sugar on, and port and sherry wine, and I don't know what! Much of that *I* ever see'd in my delicate childhood, and I wanted it as bad as you, by your own showing."

"You had what I could give you, Samuel. You know I have never been so well off as poor father and mother."

"And whose fault is that? If you 'd only——"

"Not a word on that subject, Samuel."

"Gammon! It's been a sore one to me. Why didn't you make old Cassidy marry you?"

"Samuel, I will not hear——"

"Wasn't you always dinning into my ears how fond he was of you, and you of him? And wasn't you a

born lady and him a born rough? Wouldn't he have jumped at the chance, if you 'd only encouraged him? You said so often enough. Didn't you edicate his sons for college? And wasn't it his turn to do something for *your* son? Do for me! I believe you. He just have! Slightly!"

"Samuel, you will kill me. It was not Mr. Cassidy who sent you to——"

"Jail's the word—out with it; I'm used to it now. And perhaps it wasn't him as could have got me out of it? A pitiful three pound would have squared it, for you know I always meant to return the things. And perhaps it wasn't him as took a mean advantage of my being in—in trouble, to get you to give up the shop, so as when I came out there 's no home for me, no character, and no chance of nothing. Cuss sich friends, say I!"

Our poor friend, the ex-schoolmistress! By the feeble milk-and-watery romance of her constitution, she had nurtured this hopeful cub (her only son for many years past) into a perfect monster of selfishness and ingratitude; by petting and foolish indulgence, she had first eradicated every possible germ of self-reliance in his never very promising nature. With a tendency to exaggerate everything, she had impressed him with an exorbitant sense of his delicacy, his superiority, his unfitness for arduous occupations, and natural claims to a refined and untroubled

existence. Seeking solace for her own actual hardships in dreams of an imaginary past, she had fed his greedy ears with glowing stories of how sumptuously her own youth had passed. She had told him of charms she had never possessed, of luxuries she had never enjoyed, believing implicitly she had enjoyed and possessed both. Master Samuel, whose reasoning powers, though circumscribed, were remarkably direct as far as they extended, argued as follows, from the facts and assertions before him:—

1. He, Samuel, was the most important person in the world.

2. His mother was a very superior woman, who had enjoyed vast opportunities and advantages, and the main business of whose life was, confessedly, to make him comfortable.

3. He had no recollection of having been made at any time as comfortable as he could wish, and had been led to believe it his right to expect he should be.

INFERENCE. His mother had not made the best of her opportunities, and consequently had failed in her duty towards Samuel; so Samuel had no intention of forgiving her.

The upshot and success of Mrs. Quelch's educational system, as applied to her darling son, will have been ascertained from the foregoing dialogue, of which let us hear the sequel.

"And have you not been able to obtain any work, my poor boy?"

"Work!—oh, lots, o' course. My last place was sich a good 'un; it's a fight with the employers who shall have me! Ha! ha! And the door where my own mother lives being shut in my face to begin with. That's what I call a powerful recommendation, that is."

"I wish my sainted benef—— I wish Mr. Cassidy was not so hard and unforgiving. But how do you contrive to live, my poor darling?"

"Live! Hooray! That's what *I* should like to know!" exclaims Samuel, in a shout of withering irony.

The widow wrung her hands piteously.

"What *can* I do?"

"What can *I* do? That's more like it. You have got a home, and vittles, and wages, at any rate. Allow that, mother. *Be* fair."

"You have had my last farthing. I have not a decent gown to my back."

("Look at me!" interposes Samuel, appealing to his threadbare jacket.)

"If Mr. Cassidy even sees me speaking to you, he has told me he will discharge me."

"Nice man, very! But you needn't be afraid: he's out for the day. *I* know that."

"But Mr. Edward is at home."

"It ain't long since, then. I know where Mr. Edward was last night. I could soon put a spoke in *his* wheel."

"You are clever enough to do anything, if you would only apply yourself. And if we had not been so unfortunate——"

"Well, never mind that; fetch us some vittles."

"I dare not."

"Then some money."

The widow wrung her hands afresh.

"I have told you I have not a farthing."

Mr. Samuel knew she was speaking the truth. His manner suddenly changed. He became circumspect—conciliating.

"Look here, mother," he said. "I know times is hard, and we *have* been very unlucky. I don't want to be hard on you; but as nobody will employ a poor outcast wretch like me" (Samuel whimpered): "if you *had* had a shilling to spare, I couldn't have refused it; or a crust of bread, for that matter."

"My p-p-p-poor b-b-bo-oy!"

"Well; never mind. You can put me in the way of earning a couple of shillings—on the quiet—if you really ain't turned agin me. Look here."

Samuel produced a letter.

"I 'm to have two bob if I deliver this to Miss Biddy without anybody knowing. Now, *you 're* nobody; and if you 'd only slip it into her hand——"

"I won't touch it," said the widow, recoiling.

"Why not?"

"Who is it from?"

"A strange party, as I know no more than you do. But he seen me hanging here about the place, and asked me to give it. Quite the gentleman, I assure you. He's waiting for me in the churchyard."

"In my benefactor's house! Never!"

"Why? What's the harm in giving a letter? We don't know what's in it—do we?"

Mrs. Quelch thought she did. Since her engagement in the capacity of duenna to Biddy—who, by the way, stood in no sort of need of any such attendant—the widow had been haunted by visions of libertine collegians, the main business of whose lives was the undermining of female virtue in humble life. She kept a very sharp eye even upon the Honourable Cymon Pyebush (now regularly installed as Biddy's pupil in the Greek language), who was as honourable as his title, and who treated Biddy as respectfully as if she had been a duchess and his own sister. Besides, whatever the widow may have tried to think of her idolised son, the fact of his being the chosen bearer of the epistle under notice was the reverse of a guarantee of its harmless character.

"I will not look at it," she said. "I will rather beg or steal. Stay here and I will bring you some

food. But do not show me that letter again. Hide yourself while I am gone."

Hiding seemed to suit Mr. Samuel's books admirably. He had, in fact, from the very commencement of their *tête-à-tête*, instinctively ensconced himself within the shadow of an extempore tent-like erection of heavy planks, piled hastily together in the courtyard. On his mother's departure he plunged still more deeply into the recesses of this friendly shelter, and soliloquised:

"She 'll borrow something from somebody, I 'll bet. Whatever it is, it will be all to the good. I 've got five bob out of the swell already—there was no need to tell *her* the exact figure. If I can see Miss Biddy herself, and get an answer, it 's another five. I suppose they are up to some sly game together; and perhaps *she 'll* tip me something, too, for keeping dark. Anyhow I 'm glad nobody sees me, they are such an infernally strong set of fellows here."

By the way, I have translated Mr. Quelch's diction into something approaching the vernacular. But he really spoke in the Oxonian modification of the English language—I mean the one employed by the lower orders of the classic city, not that in vogue among the members of the University—a *patois* which it would be impossible for a Londoner to write or read phonetically and with fluency. And yet it is founded on a principle of extreme simplicity. A learned friend

of mine has explained it thus. The natives of Oxford contract for all the H's that are dropped in London, and have, consequently, a great many more on hand than they know what to do with. In order to keep down the surplus, they stick one on to every unprotected vowel they meet with. Thus, if I had made Mr. Samuel Quelch talk in pure back-street Oxonian, instead of in ordinarily corrupt English, I should have made him say "Hi" for "I," "hand" for "and," and should have been compelled to make him use the indefinite article "hay," to the employment of which we are not accustomed.

Mr. Quelch was in error as to the security of his position. Somebody besides his mother had seen and watched him narrowly. Scarcely had he concluded his soliloquy, when the terrible figure of Soft Jimmy presented itself at the entrance of his chosen refuge.

Jimmy looked truculent and dangerous; Sam Quelch turned pale, and trembled.

"How do, Jimmy?" he said, with ill-assumed composure.

Jimmy showed no disposition to parley, but deliberately seized Sam Quelch's neckcloth, by the aid of which he proceeded to lift him out of his hiding-place. Sam, who had no idea of being strangled illegally or before his time, resented this treatment with much kicking and as great an amount of screaming as the tightening grip of the irresponsible giant

would permit. Jimmy, whose *idée fixe* seemed to be the forcible ejectment of Sam, proceeded to punish this display of contumacy by banging the head of his captive against the planks that sheltered him. Sam struggled to the best of his ability. The frail edifice gave way, and fell with a terrific crash, burying the combatants in its ruins.

The bellowing of the idiot and of his unlucky victim brought out the entire household to the scene of the catastrophe. Ted appeared from the boat-house in his shirt-sleeves. Four or five workmen scampered down the step-ladder from the workshop. Biddy, Mrs. Quelch, and our old friend, the Honourable Cymon Pyebush—the latter exclaiming "By Jove!" at rapid intervals—rushed from the parlour.

The fallen planks and balks, of which the number and weight were formidable, were soon lifted. Jimmy started to his feet, his face streaming with blood, looking particularly savage and horrible.

Sam Quelch remained motionless, groaning inarticulately. The widow threw herself upon his body, which she began kissing and undressing, with much incoherent lamentation.

Jimmy seemed bent on a fresh attack, and was with difficulty held back by the united forces of Ted, Pyebush, and the workmen.

"Jimmy, what is the meaning of this?" Biddy asked, authoritatively.

"Mas'r said,—if he come—annoy mother—was to pitch him out. Wouldn't go—planks fall down," Jimmy answered, evidently very angry at being balked of his prey.

"He has killed him, my poor ill-used, angel boy!" said the widow. Speak to me, my darling!"

"I'm murdered," said Sam, faintly, "by your friend, who set a madman on to attack me. You heard him confess."

"Hold your tongue, you gallows-bird, since you're well enough to use it!" said Edward Cassidy, angrily. "Is he hurt, Mr. Pyebush?"

Cymon, reverting to old cockpit experiences, had passed his hands rapidly over the wounded man's frame.

"I think his leg is broken," said Cymon.

"Then let us get him in-doors. There's no help for it; though it's tempting a curse upon any roof to bring him under it."

"You hear your friends," said the wounded man, appealing scornfully to his mother.

"Silence, you hound, or I shall be tempted to drop you."

"Very kind of you, Master Edward, I'm sure, and I shan't forget it," said Sam, wincing with pain, and looking very much like Sir Paul Evershed, as the baronet had appeared when he made that pretty little

observation to his son about the young gentleman's mother, towards the close of the last chapter.

In the mean time Samuel's unknown employer was leisurely sauntering up and down the old churchyard of the town, awaiting the return of his messenger with great satisfaction and serenity. He was not much impressed by the solemn *genius loci* of the old Gothic building, with its quaint parasites of school and almshouse, but he enjoyed immensely the pleasure of sunning himself in the brilliant autumnal evening, and in the bright eyes of numerous fair passengers—for you must know that the churchyard walk is the Champs Elysées, the Prado, the Nevskoi Perspective, the Unter den Linden, the Via Appia, the Rotten Row, in fact, of the good town of A——. At the same time he derived more active amusement from the exercise of beheading, with an elegant riding-cane, the late wild flowers that beset his path in rank luxuriance.

It is no wonder that Sam Quelch should have been impressed with a high sense of this stranger's superiority, and should have spoken of him reverentially as "quite the gentleman." Nor is it any more surprising that the stranger should have instinctively selected Sam as a very intelligent and serviceable rascal—the very man, in fact, for his purpose (the letter addressed to Biddy being exactly what Mrs.

Quelch had suspected it to be). There was a natural chord of sympathy between the employer and the employed; for the stranger was no other than Sir Paul Evershed himself.

"My greasy friend is not faithful to his appointment," the baronet mused, smiting a tall foxglove and (as he fondly imagined) a passing butcher's daughter at the same moment. "Failed in his mission, perhaps, and is ashamed to show up. Well, the loss will be his. Perhaps I was too liberal in advance. I don't know: generosity to a messenger is always good policy; it gets your trumpet blown for you, and is a virtue in itself that makes a remarkable impression on the lower orders. Perhaps my charmer of the boat-house is not at home. Perhaps she can't write—but I forgot, she is a sign-paintress—piquant that, very! Quite a novelty. Perhaps she is coquetting, or really offended. Hardly that, I think. The letter-writing business may have been premature. I couldn't help it. Time hung so confoundedly on my hands last night, and the *cacoëthes scribendi* seized me. I really had not the heart to waste so elegant and elaborate a composition. *Quand le vin est tiré il faut en boire.* And after all, it is only to ask for an assignation, which she may grant or not as she chooses,—and I think my experience in such matters leads me to believe she will hardly refuse it. Yes, I do think I know when I have made an impression.

Heigho! a little affair of the kind would help to pass the time agreeably in this abominable desert. But I shan't wait to-day. The evenings are getting chilly, and I have a good eight miles' ride before me. The *salmi* of woodcocks I have ordered for dinner will not keep, and the other game will." Sir Paul smiled gaily at his pleasant conceit. "My friend in the fur cap must earn his second crown on a future occasion."

Sir Paul Evershed sauntered radiantly out of the churchyard, feeling five-and-twenty, and really looking very little more than that age, as the twilight deepened. There is no cosmetic like good downright selfishness. It stands to reason, that if you bestow all your cares and attentions upon one person — namely, your own—you will be able to keep it in much better condition than those of weak-minded beings who are so foolish as to wrinkle their foreheads and bend their backs with the weight of other peoples' troubles.

The baronet proceeded towards his inn, his reflections agreeably occupied alternately by the charming image of Biddy Cassidy and the anticipatory flavour of the *salmi*, having no more doubt that the former would become his easy prey than that the latter would be served up for his especial consumption at Lady Harriett Brayle's dinner-table, punctually at seven o'clock, as he had commanded.

Now, by what right did this shallow *roué* dare to look upon beautiful, gifted, and spotless Biddy Cassidy as the possible victim to *his* powers of fascination? He had spoken to her two or three times only, on occasion of hiring one of her uncle's boats, as a means of destroying some of those mortal enemies of his, the hours, which he could never kill off fast enough. He had talked a good deal of inflated nonsense to Biddy on these occasions; so preposterous and exaggerated that Biddy had taken it all for fun, and had answered it all in a corresponding spirit, like a brave, honest, light-hearted, bright-souled Irish girl, as she was. But Sir Paul Evershed, Baronet, was not a funny man. He had some wit of the slenderest calibre, to be sure, but the sense of humour was entirely wanting in his composition. Such people —I mean, rascals and coxcombs—are usually deficient in this faculty. Sir Paul was never conscious of his own absurdities. You could no more have persuaded him that the honeyed common-places of his conversation were over-charged, bombastic, ridiculous, than that his whiskers were over-curled, his linen over-perfumed, his smile forced and unnatural, or his celebrated bow a caricature of grace and courtesy. He fondly believed he had made a conquest of Biddy Cassidy, who thought him a pleasant middle-aged gentleman, with an agreeable turn for burlesque; laughed at his sighs, ogles, and compliments, while

he was present; and forgot his very existence as soon as he had paid her his money for boat-hire.

It would seem, then, that Sir Paul, in spite of the reputation for cleverness he had contrived to establish, was something very like a fool?

All so-called deep rogues are, to begin with. That is an incontrovertible axiom. And how the mere desire and aptitude to do evil became originally identified in the popular belief—as it unquestionably has been from time immemorial—with intellectual power, I have never been able to discover. It is much easier to steal a gold watch than to make a wooden salt-box; to forge a signature for a thousand pounds than to learn the fiddle well enough to earn a pound a-week by playing it; to seduce a weak, foolish woman by ready-coined lies and purchased presents, than to win the love of a wise and honest one by merit and devotion. Sir Paul Evershed, with all his surface accomplishments, was as dull a rogue as ever lived.

His vanity, if possible, exceeded his wickedness. He piqued himself, among a thousand more imaginary qualities, on his knowledge of human nature. He knew as much of it as a man afflicted with colour blindness, to whom all external nature must appear like a print or a photograph, knows of the beauties of a landscape, a flower, or a face. HE COULD NOT SEE VIRTUE! Among good people he was like a born

deaf man taken for the first time into an orchestra, wondering what senseless occupation his neighbours can be engaged in. His calculations were based on the lowest cunning. His reasoning was coarse induction from ascertained facts. Thus—he had a title, and people bowed down to it: he found it a passport to credit, and impunity for social offences. He had sinned and not suffered for it; *ergo*, he could go on sinning. He had successfully duped, victimised, or tyrannised in some way or other, over most people he had been brought in contact with; *ergo*, he was their superior. The world had supported him in idleness and luxury for the greater part of his life; *ergo*, it was the world's business to do so. If he incurred a debt, Somebody had always paid it for him. If he got into a difficulty, Somebody had always got him out of it. It was clearly Somebody's business to look after Sir Paul Evershed's welfare, and a very watchful, attentive sort of providence Somebody appeared to be.

Sir Paul was very like Sam Quelch, to be sure!

He lived like a spider in a filthy moral web of his own creation. The human race, seen through its meshes, appeared to him so many flies; beautiful Biddy Cassidy included. Wretched Spider!

Sir Paul reached his inn, and ordered his horse to the door. He paid his reckoning and mounted, having charmed the ostler by the munificence of his

parting gratuity, and the ugly barmaid by the elegant *tournure* of a marvellously trite compliment.

Sir Paul was in funds and in spirits. Shillings and smiles were of no object to him for the moment. It is astonishing how stingy and how sulky such men can become in times of hardship and depression!

"It is a lovely evening," he mused, urging his steed to a quiet amble. "It is earlier than I thought. I shall take a turn round by my friend the boat-builder's. I may meet with my messenger; or, perhaps, catch a glimpse of the charmer herself."

Sir Paul laughed merrily as he turned his horse into Miles Cassidy's quiet street.

"Yes," he continued; "I think matters seem inclined to go smoothly with me at present. Some fools allow circumstances to control them; wise men contrive to control circumstances. The ladies of the Manor House yonder appear to have come round to a proper sense of what is due to my consequence. My evil genius appears to have lost scent of me, though I am not going to let Charley know *that*. The darling boy is of such a lukewarm disposition, that unless he thinks his father in positive danger he is in the habit of leaving that venerable parent to his own resources, which at the old gentleman's time of life is positively cruel. Dear Charley! How I should like to have my lease of youth, energy, and personal attractions extended, until such time as he shall have

succeeded in setting the Thames on fire. Ha! ha! The devil!"

Sir Paul, at an angle of the street, reined in his horse so violently that the animal almost fell back upon him. The colour forsook his radiant cheeks. He wheeled his charger round, and galloped away in an opposite direction to that he had been leisurely pursuing—really as if he had been startled from his course by the father of evil himself—and with an expression of countenance wonderfully like that Sam Quelch had assumed on finding himself seized in the powerful grip of Soft Jimmy.

What had he seen?

Merely a quiet-looking elderly little man, who, enveloped in many coats and wrappers, was seated on a door-step, his hands resting on a walking-stick, and his chin on his hands, gazing at the last rays of the declining sun—a harmless occupation, which he continued, wholly unconscious of the sensation he had excited in the bosom of a British baronet, as long as the sun was in sight. When it had finally disappeared behind the roofs, the little man rose painfully from his seat, gathered his wrappings about him, and walked slowly, and with difficulty, in the direction of Miles Cassidy's courtyard, which he entered as one used to the locality.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE LITTLE ELDERLY GENTLEMAN.

WHO was the little elderly gentleman whose appearance we have seen operate so painfully on the feelings of Sir Paul Evershed, putting the agreeable reflections of that patrician, and indeed that patrician himself, so ignominiously to the rout?

Who, indeed? That is a question that has been agitating the public mind of A—— most painfully for the last fortnight, and the community at large would be very much obliged to you if you could answer it.

It is very easy to say that the little elderly gentleman is a cripple and an invalid—anybody can see that; or that he is a foreigner—you can tell that by his defective pronunciation of the English language; or that he is named Giovanni (the natives pronounce it Jivarney), for he says so himself; or that he is Miles Cassidy's lodger, for each half of the little world of A—— knows at least where, if not absolutely how,

the other half lives. But what part of the world he comes from, who he is, what he is up to, what business he has in England, and in that part of it especially, how long he intends to stop, what connection he can have with the Cassidy family, and why on earth he should have taken up his abode in their notoriously inconvenient and (latterly) parsimonious establishment,—in short, "*qui diable allait-il faire dans cette galère?*" generally, is a most exasperating and baffling problem to the inhabitants, who hate Mr. Jivarney and his abettors for not coming forward spontaneously and manfully with its solution.

Giovanni has been discovered to be an Italian name, but is believed to have been unwarrantably assumed by the unknown. Miss Bokes, the attorney's daughter, who, having been educated in Brussels, is of course an Italian scholar, has tackled him in what she believes to be the purest Tuscan, and declares that he does not understand her. This is, at least, suspicious. A Frenchman he certainly is not, for he endures serenely the most scorching ordeal of street-boy sarcasm on the subjects of frogs, snuff-taking, and the famous discomfiture of Waterloo, with which the rising generation of A—— are already tired of assailing him. Nor is he a German; *teste* Mr. Grosshünd, the Calvinistic clock-dealer from the Hartz Mountains, who unhesitatingly pronounces him a Jewish refugee from a village on the Polish

frontier; notorious, as Grosshünd asserts, for the dishonesty of its inhabitants. A rival tradesman, Mr. Lazarus Brodie, the pawnbroker and general dealer—himself avowedly a member of the ancient religion, and native of the district referred to, whom Grosshünd finds it impossible to undersell in the matter of wooden clocks—scouts this as a ridiculous calumny on his race and place of nativity; which, attributing it to the lowest professional jealousy, he bears in the spirit of a philosopher. Lazarus has his own theory about the mysterious stranger. He more than hints that the unknown is nothing more or less than a native of Ireland—possibly Miles Cassidy's brother or uncle—who has shot his landlord and is endeavouring to keep out of the way, concealing his identity by the assumption of a foreign accent. But since the establishment in the town of one Jeremiah Mullins, who has succeeded in undermining Mr. Brodie's once solid connection in the matter of left-off wearing apparel, Lazarus is known to have acquired an illiberal prejudice against the Irish nation. So his theory is abandoned with the rest.

Next to the infamous, because unfathomable, Mr. Jivarney himself, the most unpopular person in connection with his unhallowed mystery is Edward Cassidy. Even by his warmest partisans Ted is admitted to have acted inconsistently with the duties of a good citizen in the matter. He evidently knows all about

it, and won't tell (as for expecting *Miles* Cassidy to tell you about anybody else's business that does not immediately concern you, you might as well expect him to let you into the innermost secrets of his own). Was it not too obviously part of a concerted scheme, that Ted should be standing at the inn-door in his shirt-sleeves when the stranger descended from the roof of the Oxford coach, and threw himself, gesticulating and jabbering an unknown tongue, into young Cassidy's arms? Edward's astonishment was very well feigned, it is true—the Cassidys are a clever family—but it was too soon over to have been genuine. The way in which he pretended to recognise the stranger suddenly, and marched him off—*without a word of explanation to anybody*—to the paternal roof, was a perfect insult to the collective wisdom of the town. It is true that Ted, on that very evening, had almost anticipated cross-examination by a voluntary statement that he did not know the stranger from Adam, except as a man whom his father and himself had been so fortunate as to help out of a street row in London; that he might be a Dutchman, a Portugee, or a Lily-prooshan, for anything he (Edward) had taken the liberty to inquire. The young man had gone on to state that the meeting at the coach-office was the result of pure accident; that he had merely taken the stranger round home to see the governor; that

the said stranger and the said governor had "hit it wonderfully;" had hit it so hard in fact, and clenched it so rapidly, that the former, who it appeared had private business in the neighbourhood of A——, had been at once nailed by the latter (Miles's eye to the main chance having been of late notoriously more awake than ever) as a lodger, upon advantageous terms to the establishment. He had paid a month's rent in advance; appeared very much delighted with everything and everybody—and there you were!

All this was very plausible, but nobody believed a single word of it; principally, it may be, because it was the plain straightforward truth; and Edward Cassidy lost caste immensely for its attempted imposition.

The idea of Mr. Jivarney having any *business* in the neighbourhood was absolutely preposterous. Since his arrival he had done nothing publicly but sit in the sun, which luminary he appeared to dun for light and warmth, like a remorseless creditor. If they had ever heard of vampires in A——, the natives might have derived some pardonable satisfaction from comparing the bloodless, shivering, scarce earthly-looking form of the stranger, to a solar variety of that fabulous race, approaching the end of his lease, and anxiously awaiting a favourable access of the revivifying principle.

Whatever the connection between Mr. Jivarney

and the sunlight, it was clearly suspended for the day. The sun had set. The bank was closed. No further gold payments till morrow. Mr. Jivarney raised the siege, and, as we have seen, hobbled home.

He entered Miles Cassidy's kitchen (the family sitting-room of late; Miles, in his new phase of economy, would not have the parlour chairs sat upon), and found himself in the midst of an excited family council.

Miles Cassidy, just arrived from a journey, was seated at a covered table, devouring cold meat and swallowing tea in large quantities. An open letter was before him. Our old friend's brow was clouded with anger and perplexity; but he was not angry with the cold mutton, or perplexed as to his duty towards bread, butter, and tea. Miles never neglected the commissariat. His first principle in warfare was to keep the forces well victualled on all occasions.

Ned Cassidy, in his shirt-sleeves, with his hair and dress disordered, leaned with his elbow on the mantelpiece, his back half turned on the other personages, and looking a most unamiable picture of discontent and truculency. A few blood-stains on his hands and linen by no means enhanced the graces of his appearance.

Biddy, with a flushed face, and the Honourable

Cymon Pyebush, resplendent in a voluminous pair of what we wear and ridicule as "peg-tops," but what our fathers and uncles wore and honoured as "Cossack trousers," completed the party.

The entrance of the foreigner interrupted a conversation. Miles Cassidy rose briskly from his seat, and welcomed the new-comer, who advanced towards him with a radiant smile and both hands extended, with obsequious, not to say slavish, politeness.

"And how are you, Misther Jivarney?—a nice asy chair there—quick! but I needn't ask, for ye 're looking prime. There 's no air like ours, depind upon it. Your own place—here by the snug fire. And a thrifle o' coal, boy—but it 's not so chilly today: you needn't, p'rhaps. Ye 'll excuse my going on ating, sir—Misther Pyebush is good enough to allow me, being pressed for time—thank ye, sir; and maybe ye 'll pick a bit yourself. But it 's not your time, I forgot: ye 're right, there, sir, for a man of wake health there 's nothing like regularity in males."

An angry "Pish!" from Edward expressed the son's opinion of the father's cheap lip-hospitality. Mr. Cassidy discreetly ignored the criticism.

"You 've come in to find us in a peck o' throuble, sir," he resumed, avenging his wrongs on the mutton with increased ferocity.

The Italian had drawn his chair to the hearth, and was apathetically extending his shrivelled hands over

the not very exhilarating glow of a scanty fire. But at the word "trouble," his torpid frame seemed suddenly animated. He turned round in his seat with true meridional excitement. His large sunken eyes dilated, his wrinkled face quivered all over as he darted round the room an unmistakable glance of affectionate alarm and anxiety.

"*La malore!*" he exclaimed. "There is no one hurt? Yourself—mia Brigitta—Eduardo—ah, *sangue!*—there is blood! What! you have rescue somebody again—like me, and you are wounded?"

"No fear of that, Mr. Giovanni," said Ted. "This is no blood of mine—a man's been hurt by the fall of some timber in the yard. That's all."

"Ah!"

Mr. Giovanni appeared immensely relieved by this gratifying explanation.

"Then you have receive bad news?" he asked, pointing to the open letter on the table, which Miles kept before him—certainly not for the satisfaction of reading it, for he couldn't, but apparently for that of digging spiteful blows at it at intervals with his knife and fork. "You have not lose money, eh?"

Mr. Giovanni made an instinctive and sympathetic movement of his hand in the direction of his breeches-pocket, an action that was not lost on Miles Cassidy.

"Thank ye, sir," said Miles. "I 've a friend in

you, I know; and the same to you, Mr. Pyebush, sir, with my sarvice to you, however I be off nearer home for that matter. But with the Lord's blessing I 'll not come upon you yet, sir. There 's money loss at the bottom of it, no doubt—bedad there is in everything these times." ("Pish!" number two from the discontented member at the mantelpiece.) "The cost of that letther, sir—bad 'cess to the pin and ink that was father and mother to it!—may be lashings o' money out of my pocket—holy mother! and with a broken leg to pay for! Bad luck to Jimmy for not killing the dhurty scoundthrel outright!" (Mr. Giovanni received this mysterious parenthesis in mute astonishment.) "But the raal throuble is, sir, that it might be all bridged over and hushed up, but for *some folks* that can never make smooth when they 've a chance to make rough. There 's blind men, Misther Jivarney, as mislikes helping their own lame dogs over a stile, sir."

This allegorical peroration was pointed by a fierce glance round in the direction of the mantelpiece. Having delivered himself of it, Mr. Cassidy re-applied himself to the last remaining bone of the cold neck of mutton, which he reduced to a high state of polish in a few seconds.

The Italian, believing he had intruded upon a family quarrel which did not concern him, discreetly turned his attention to the fire.

"Well, father," said Ted, after a sullen pause, "what do you mean to do?"

"Nothing, alanna," Miles answered, with a *naïve* slyness, "if you'll help me, for wanst. What do you?"

"Nothing, also," said Ted, sulkily. "What is Biddy to me? Why not one make love to her as well as another, since you are so ready to encourage all comers? Only be prepared to have your house full of them soon. It's term time in Oxford."

Biddy's face and neck flushed to an angry crimson. Cymon Pyebush made one stride forwards, but checked himself at a deprecating gesture from Miles.

"Don't notice him, sir," said Miles, hurriedly. "He was drunk last night; he is mad now. He would ruin us all. He'd drive away all my friends. He sides with the town, that calls me a skinflint and a miser."

"True," said Edward.

"You're a liar!" thundered Miles, "and a blind, God-deserted fool! Misther Pyebush — Misther Jivarney—gintlemen both—I want every friend and every penny I can scrape together. You don't know how much. Biddy, what have I been to you?"

Biddy flew to his side, and answered him with a caress more eloquent than words.

"Would I see you come to harm? Would ye all have been what ye are but for me? Look at the

tools I 've had to do my work with, and what I 've done with 'em; but ye 'll never know, none of you—especially *him* there, that 's the bad egg in the crate. Biddy, alanna! wasn't it a bright day for you when you found you could help the poor ould man in his heart's dhrame—by turning the honest penny with the scholarship he 'd scraped together for you?"

Biddy sobbed her answer on her uncle's bosom.

"Have I brought you up sugar or salt, that you 're in danger of being melted by *that* wish-washy stuff?"

Miles pointed with withering scorn to the letter.

"Don't you know the want and the fear that makes me a miser and a skinflint, Biddy, alanna?"

"All—all about it."

"If by offending the poor sinseless coxcomb that penned them lines I should lose what 's the heart's blood to me—you know why—MONEY! would you have me quarrel with him, merely to do him no harm, but to send him abroad spaking ill of us?"

"No, no."

"Isn't he cousin, or uncle, or nephew of the ould woman I 'm doing up the house for? Should I challenge him to fight a jewel, or send Misther Ted there to break his delicate bones for him? Faix, I 'd like to do it myself well enough, but I 'm a poor man, and can't afford them luxuries for myself. Mightn't you have love-letthers in any walk of life? Can't me and Jimmy take care of the house—mind the pre-

sarves agin all poachers? Ask the broken-legged blackguard up-stairs there."

The Honourable Cymon Pyebush here broke silence with obvious difficulty, and after much coughing.

"Mr. Cassidy, Miss Cassidy, gentlemen,—I am no dab at a speech, and however I may get on at the Schools, I shall never cut what you may call a figure at the Union. Your son has insinuated that I am the cause of certain people presuming to insult Miss Cassidy with impertinent addresses. I am not offended with him; perhaps he is right. I am getting on with my Greek; and if I ever get the living, I shall owe it to Miss Cassidy. But I am aware that thoughtless University-men may ascribe my intimacy with this gifted family—I never thought of it before—to a motive which is, in short—not Greek. I would rather die—in point of fact, give up the living—than compromise Miss Cassidy for a moment. I begin to think I *am* compromising her; and if you think I can at all rectify matters by renouncing, as one might say, the past and future—in short, by giving up all thoughts of a degree, and throwing my grandfather finally overboard—by picking an independent quarrel with this impudent scoundrel, who has no more right to lift his eyes to Miss Cassidy than I should have had to dream of the family living without the advantages of this young lady's instructions—why, having letters of introduction to Brayle

Manor, and knowing a few circumstances that would justify me in insulting this Sir Thingumy Evershed——"

A wild shriek from the vicinity of the fireplace interrupted the proposal.

Mr. Giovanni, looking more like a vampire than ever, but like a vampire whose lease of life has been suddenly and unexpectedly renewed, sprang to his feet, and, with the rapidity of a darting serpent, threaded himself through the intervening chairs and tables till he found himself face to face with the Honourable Cymon Pyebush, into whose eyes his own glared horribly.

Pyebush, the giant, was frightened. Your very little men can look so terrible at times!—especially if they happen to be also cripples!

"Say again—that name," Mr. Giovanni hissed between his clenched teeth.

"Evershed."

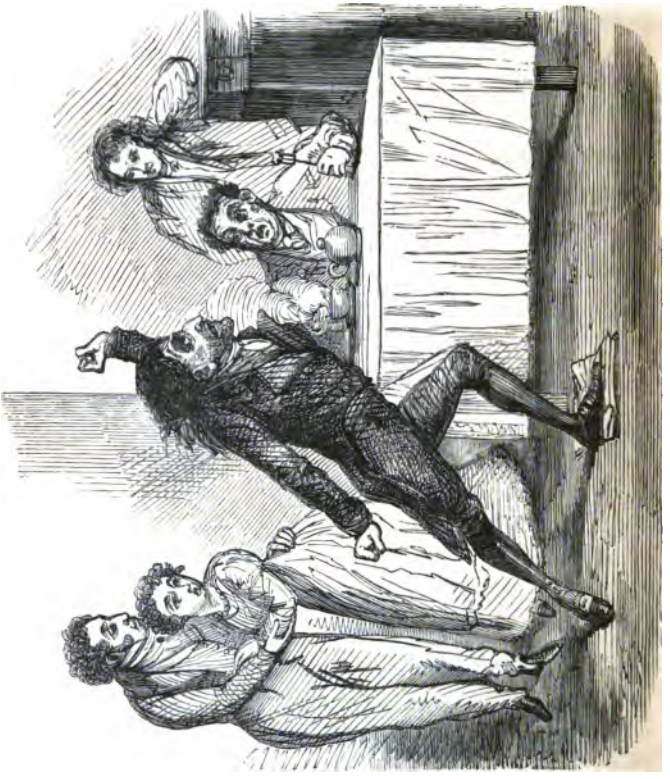
"Paul?"

"That is his name, now you mention it." Pyebush had recovered his soldier-like courage, and was ready for death or the devil.

The Italian pounced upon the open letter, which, having rapidly glanced at, he first brandished in the air, then threw down and stamped upon.

"I should have known!" he exclaimed. (I will not attempt to give the mixture of English and

Italian *patois* of which his passionate oratory was composed.) "I should have smelt the paper, and the ink, and the wax! I have a dozen of the same —here—burning, like hot irons, upon my bosom. I cannot read the English; but I know the turn of his



letters—I know his seal. The fool!—the ass!—the idiot! He has come into the lion's den. He has come to shed his venom again where I am. He has not wronged me enough! He must burn my new home, too, as well as my old one. You strong men! you fighters! you fathers, brothers and friends, leave him to poor, weak me! I shall crush him—tread on him as I tread on and crush *that.*"

"By Jove!" exclaimed the Honourable Cymon Pyebush, catching the frightened Biddy in his arms, a proceeding at which Mr. Edward Cassidy looked very much offended indeed.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

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